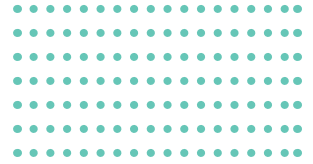




# ***The MPX Guide to Direct Mail Marketing Success***







## ***Acknowledgements***

The MPX Group would like to thank the Postal Professor, George Heinrich of Postal 911 in Denver, CO, for proofing the text of this book for accuracy. Postal guidelines are a tangled web of rules and regulations, and George's help deciphering the intricacies of the Domestic Mail Manual was very much appreciated. We'd also like to thank our own postal guru, Karl Mathias, for his knowledge and guidance during the creation of this book.





# ***Table of Contents***

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Letter from Phil Kotula, Owner and CEO	7
<b>1</b> Introduction to Direct Mail Marketing	11
<b>2</b> Mailing Lists	15
<b>3</b> Variable Data Printing / Personalization	33
<b>4</b> Design & Content	39
<b>5</b> Postal Service Guidelines	49
<b>6</b> Glossary of Direct Mail Marketing Terms	63

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## ***Letter from Phil Kotula, Owner and CEO***

In my experience, clients care about one thing when they spend their marketing dollars – a healthy return on investment (ROI).

With marketing comes risk, as clients well know. Chances are, at some point, every business bets on the wrong horse. You can even bet on an old favorite and lose your shirt.

That's why using consumer analytics is so important. It reduces the risk.

We can access and analyze vast sums of consumer data quickly and systematically so you can target prospects that are most likely to buy what you're selling. It increases your odds of success exponentially.

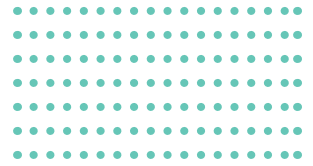
**Direct mail marketing has one of the top returns on investment among all marketing mediums, thanks to the capabilities of analytics to identify the best prospects.**

Analytics have also changed the way we create direct mail campaigns. You can now personalize the letter for each recipient, addressing their specific needs and interests. It creates a personal relationship with the buyer.

But the most potent impact of analytics on direct mail is on mailing lists.

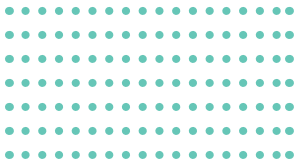
Let me show you what I mean by telling you a true story. Every great direct mail letter needs a compelling story, after all.

A few years ago, an MPX client earned a 2,200 percent ROI on a single mailing. The mailing cost them \$20,000, and three weeks later, they had a net return of \$442,000.



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The club didn't understand who their ideal clients were. They thought they were looking for people who lived near their club and liked golf. They should have been looking for people who wanted the social experience of a private club and could afford to join.



A 2,200 percent ROI is not a typical result, nor one anyone can guarantee. All the key variables – the mailing list, precisely the right offer, exactly the right time – aligned in perfect symmetry.

But it wasn't a fluke.

Nor were the results of another client who spent \$15,000 on a mailing that did not receive a single response. Nada.

What makes these two cases so interesting to me is that the two clients are so similar. Both are upscale private golf clubs set in idyllic surroundings in the Minneapolis suburbs, looking for new members.



**A LOSING BET**

The club that lost \$15,000 made the same mistakes a lot of businesses make. They used an old mailing list and targeted the wrong prospects (in their case, nearby residents who subscribe to *Golf Digest* magazine). I knew immediately that the list wouldn't deliver the results they wanted.

There are all kinds of people who belong to private golf clubs, and they join for many different reasons. Those reasons don't necessarily include golf.

But they all have a few things in common:

- They have high enough incomes to afford membership to a private club;
- They want an upscale place to socialize with affluent people;
- They live in some general proximity to the club;
- And, most likely they have a family who will use the club.

*Golf Digest* targets casual golfers who don't necessarily play at higher-end private clubs. But again, it's not really about golf.

The club didn't understand who their ideal clients were. They thought they were looking for people who lived near their club and liked golf. They should have been looking for people who wanted the social experience of a private club and could afford to join.



Using an old mailing list also hurt them. People move all the time. After one year, you expect at least 30 to 40 percent of the addresses to be bad.

I urged the club to acquire a better list, but they didn't want to spend the money. It's a common reaction.

The lack of a compelling offer is also a prevalent mistake. I think it comes from not being crystal clear about what kind of client you're looking for and what your goal is for the marketing campaign.

Their offer was, roughly, "We're a great golf club. Call us if you're interested in joining." It's a "non-offer" offer. **What you need in order to motivate a prospect to buy is an irresistible offer.**

## A WINNING BET

The phenomenal response the other club got from its mailing worked by carefully thought-out design.

Their goal was to sell 90 social memberships throughout the marketing campaign. To accomplish that, the mailing list and the offer would be crucial and interlinked.

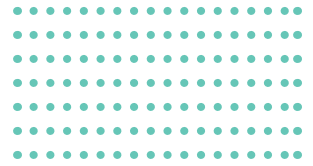
- We spent a lot of time with the club, trying to understand who their ideal members were.
- Then, we searched databases for groups that mirrored their ideal members and found a group we thought was a fit perfect – people who have family memberships to upscale gyms and health clubs.
- We decided to cast a wide net. Club memberships are big-ticket items, so we knew the response rate would be low. Only a small percentage of recipients would have the income and interest to join. But those who qualified would probably be willing to drive farther to belong to a fabulous private club.
- We came up with a killer offer.

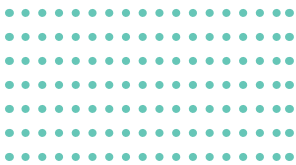
The average monthly cost of a family health club membership is \$160. Our job was to get our offer as close to that as possible without breaking the bank. My client needed to be profitable, after all. We ran the numbers again and again until we came up with the best offer they could afford – \$180 a month for an experience far more exceptional than belonging to a health club.

Then we created a mailing piece that asked, basically, "What do you spend a month on your health club membership?"

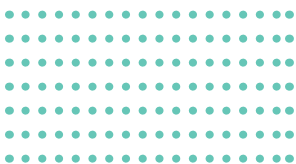
Our offer: for \$180 a month, you can have a social membership to an upscale golf club in a gorgeous lakeside setting, with fine dining, lodging, and use of our fully equipped gym, pool, tennis courts, and other non-golf amenities. We also asked for a one-time \$500 membership fee.

We got 96 new members in three weeks.





The polar opposite results for the two clubs all boiled down to two critical decisions – the mailing lists they used and the offers they made.



Breaking the return down, it amounted to \$48,000 cash up front in membership fees and \$415,000 in monthly user fees on a two-year contract.

The club risked \$20,000, but to their thinking, they would cover their costs on five new members per mailing. What they didn't know is that it would take only one mailing to achieve their goal of 90 new members.



So you see it wasn't a fluke. It was a well thought out campaign, executed to perfection.

Since the response was so tremendous, you might ask if they could have charged more than they did for the membership. But the membership price – as it related to the health club membership – was the compelling element that drove the appeal.

The club was also smart to market a social membership. Golf memberships are much more expensive and harder to sell. But once a person becomes a social member, it's far easier to upsell them on the golf membership.

The polar opposite results for the two clubs all boiled down to two critical decisions – the mailing lists they used and the offers they made.

Yes, marketing is risky. It's also vital to your business growth.

I understand the need to stay on budget, but it's also essential to listen to the experts. We have the knowledge to guide clients through the process. For instance, we'll tell you if it's a mistake to use a particular mailing list because we know from our experience it won't work.

***Lean on our experience. That's why we're here.***

# 1

## ***Introduction to Direct Mail Marketing***







# ***Introduction to Direct Mail Marketing***

We live in a digital world, a world of rapid-fire changes and fierce competition for consumer attention. Still, there's something about holding a well-designed, high-quality printed piece in your hands that works.

Direct mail marketing owns the largest portion of local advertising in the U.S. It gets higher response rates than other forms of marketing.

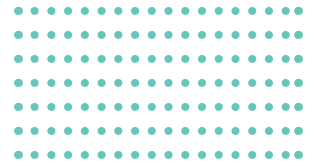
It's more personal, less invasive, and people trust it.

There are some exciting new trends in direct mail marketing that make it more effective:

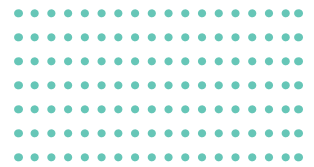
- personalization techniques that individualize each mailpiece;
- predictive analysis and look-alike modeling that builds lists of prospects who mirror your best clients;
- specialty printing effects that give mailing pieces a dynamic new look and feel;
- USPS Informed Delivery service that creates multi-channel marketing for your Direct Mail campaign to reach the Millennial and Gen Z markets.

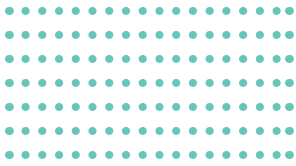
This book covers it all.

Before you get into the nitty-gritty of creating a direct mailing campaign, there are some "big picture" details you should consider.



Direct mail marketing owns the largest portion of local advertising in the U.S. It gets higher response rates than other forms of marketing.





You cannot determine the success of a direct mail campaign by just one mailing.



## CAMPAIGNS AND REPETITION

Sending a mailer to a prospect one time doesn't mean it will get read, much less lead to a sale. It takes more than one piece. It takes a campaign.

Build your campaign using the same mailing list a minimum of four to six times. To stay top of mind and catch prospects when they're ready to buy, we recommend you send them a mail piece every three to four weeks.

You can vary your approach. For instance, you can send recipients:

- the same mail piece several times;
- a mail piece with a new design, but the same message;
- mailpieces that uses a different message or offer.

The response you receive from the mailers you send will determine if you stay the course or change tactics. If you're confident you've got a good mailing list, keep mailing to them. Ultimately, your goal is to promote your brand and position yourself as a competitor for their business.

You cannot determine the success of a direct mail campaign by just one mailing.

## STRATEGIES

The first step in a successful direct mail marketing campaign is a strategic plan. Look at your sales data so that you know who buys what and when. Determine your target market for the campaign, set a budget, and calculate the response you need to meet your goals.

You can meet with MPX if you need help creating your direct mail plan.

## TIMING

Timing is everything. It's like priming a pump. Start your marketing campaign a few months before your peak selling seasons begin. You want to be at the top of mind when the season starts. It's why Christmas advertising begins in October.

You can stimulate higher sales during your typically slow season when you start marketing to prospects a few months before. If you're planning a product launch or a special event, don't wait until the last minute. Again, prime the pump.

## MULTIPLE CHANNELS

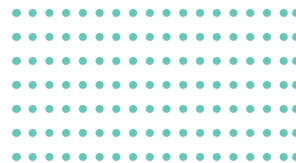
Direct mail can enhance the outcomes of other forms of marketing you use, so plan your direct mail campaign to complement and fortify them. For instance, if you've scheduled a big in-store or online promotion, focus your direct mail on those campaigns to bolster them.

## TARGETED MAILINGS

A key strategy we suggest is to do smaller, targeted mailings to specific types of prospects. Groom the offer specifically for them. Multiple targeted mailings often work better than one large, "one-size-fits-all" mailing. Different sales offers to different groups can be a great strategy.

Targeted mailings let you reach different segments of your market in ways that specifically meet their needs.

Targeted mailings also let you test offers and strategies less expensively, make adjustments until you find what works best, before committing to a more extensive mailing.



## USPS INFORMED DELIVERY

Informed Delivery is a new USPS service that can help you increase your ROI by adding a marketing channel to your Direct Mail Marketing campaign.

Informed Delivery offers postal customers the option of being informed daily via email of what mail is on its way to their mailbox. Customers receive the email, which contains digital preview of all the mail pieces that are in the mail stream. Informed Delivery offers businesses the opportunity to engage those same postal customers through an interactive multi-channel marketing campaign combining mail and digital formats. **Businesses that participate are provided digital portals showcasing the same information that is in the mailpiece.** The postal customer can click on a link to the portal and respond immediately instead of waiting to retrieve the mailpiece if they wish.

Response rates for informed delivery campaigns can be higher than traditional mailings because the campaign reaches them in two marketing channels – online and by mail. It targets Millennials and Gen Z markets, who are often more comfortable responding to marketing online.

Many postal customers are not yet enrolled in Informed Delivery because USPS has just begun rolling out the service. The Post Office can compare your database to its list of Informed Delivery customers. It will send you a headcount of recipients on your mailing list enrolled in the program. That will give you an idea as to whether the service makes sense for your campaign.

For more information on USPS Informed Delivery for Business Mailers, go to <https://www.usps.com/business/informed-delivery.htm>.

## CONTINUITY AND OVERSIGHT

Here's a checklist of what you'll need to manage all the moving parts of a direct mail campaign :

- A consultant to work with you to develop your strategic plan and identify your ideal prospects;
- A mailing service to procure the right mailing list for you, filled with only prospects with the same attributes and proclivities of your best clients;
- A mailing service to manage and maintain the mailing list for you, so you don't waste money sending to bad addresses or poor prospects;
- A printing company able to personalize your mailpiece using variable data and images;



When you're looking for partners to help you with your direct mail campaign, have a plan on how to manage all the moving parts.

- A graphic designer who can create an eye-catching piece that will work within your printing and postal budgets. If you have an in-house designer, you'll need someone with whom they can consult about postal regulations to make sure your mailpiece is 100 percent USPS compatible;
- A writer who can get your message across, with headlines that grab a reader's attention and compelling copy that will keep them reading straight through to the Call to Action;
- A printing company with digital and offset presses who can run jobs regardless of size and who offers specialty printing techniques;
- An expert in USPS regulations who knows how to set up your mailing list and advises you on postal costs;
- A company invested in your success that can deliver you the best ROI possible.

When you're looking for partners to help you with your direct mail campaign, have a plan on how to manage all the moving parts.

You can quickly lose the continuity and oversight of the direct mail campaign if you divvy up the various components between too many sources. There's truth to the proverb "too many cooks spoil the broth." There's no point in saving money on components if the campaign isn't successful.

***Now, you can get down to the nitty-gritty.***



All postal regulations and guidelines contained in this book come from information provided by the USPS Domestic Mail Manual as of October 30, 2019. To inquire about changes in the regulations and guidelines, contact your MPX Sales Rep or visit [https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300\\_landing.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300_landing.htm).



# 2

## ***Mailing Lists***







## ***Mailing Lists***

A well-designed strategy for building a mailing list is the key to a successful Direct Mail Marketing campaign. There are two main categories of mailing lists. The first is a “house” list, which you build yourself from contact information and other data you collect from customers and prospects. The second is a “rental” list, which is compiled by a list service company using select demographics and propensities you choose that mirror your best customers. You can rent the list for one mailing or multiple mailings.

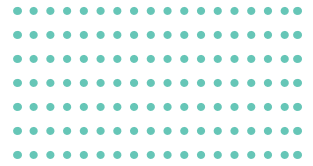
### **THE HOUSE LIST**

At its simplest, a house list is a collection of names and addresses of your customers, and prospects who have indicated an interest in your products or services.

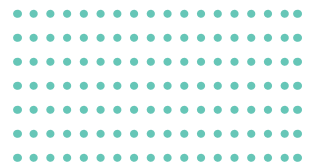
The keys to building a valuable house list are to keep it accurate and up-to-date. As a list becomes older, it becomes increasingly inaccurate and ineffective. Update your house list frequently. Errors from outdated information can come across as insensitive and may even damage your relationship with your customer.

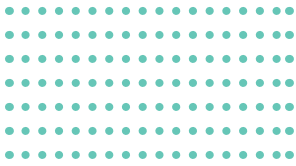
**Tracking customers’ buying histories** can strengthen the list’s value by letting you analyze and predict buying patterns. It can include dates of purchases, dollar amounts of purchases, types of products and services purchased, and time between purchases. Then you can schedule your marketing campaigns to coincide with your customers’ buying patterns.

The house list becomes even more valuable when you collect other demographic data that is pertinent to your business. It allows you to **create targeted lists (known as segments)** within your house list. Then you can do smaller mailings that tailor the marketing message to be more relevant and feel more personal.



A well-designed strategy for building a mailing list is the key to a successful Direct Mail Marketing campaign.





## MARKETING TO BUSINESSES

When marketing to businesses, you can collect and sort contacts by location, industry, sales volume, number of employees, type of clients, or years in business. That way you can, for instance, target companies of a specific size or number of employees, or those most likely to purchase specialty equipment.

Often, you can ask businesses for the information you seek. You also can do some simple investigating at places such as state and federal business registration sites, Dun & Bradstreet, company websites, or any number of other online resources.

To target a specific industry, add to your house list through the U.S. Census North American Industry Classification System at [www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/](http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/). It provides information on companies that fit your criteria. The same is true for the Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC). Both systems identify companies by industry-specific codes that the company has selected to describe their business activity.

## MARKETING TO CONSUMERS

When selling to consumers, you can collect information about them that you can use in marketing. Demographics like location, age, and gender are the most common. Other relevant information, like family composition, income level, homeownership, credit ratings, and hobbies, can be valuable to collect to determine whether they are good prospects. You can use a questionnaire or request information as part of a drawing for prizes or other promotion to gather the information you desire.

*Here is a sample questionnaire:*

### SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AUDIOLOGY CLINIC

1. How far do you live from the clinic?  
Does that seem like a long way?
2. Do you drive yourself to your appointment?
3. Do you own your own home?
4. How long have you lived there?
5. Who do you live with?
6. Have family members noticed your hearing loss?
7. If so, how does that impact your relationship?
8. What is the most frustrating part of your hearing loss?
9. What would you listen to if you could hear something perfectly clear?
10. How often do you get your hearing checked?
11. How do you compensate for your hearing loss?  
Little tricks to help you hear better?
12. How old are you?
  - 18-24
  - 25-34
  - 35-54
  - 55-64
  - 65+
13. How would you best describe your ethnicity?
14. What is your annual household income?
  - Under \$15K
  - \$15,000 - \$24,999
  - \$25,000 - \$49,000
  - \$50,000 - \$74,999
  - \$75,000 - \$99,999
  - \$100,000 - \$149,999
  - \$150,000 +

## THE RENTAL LIST

Use MPX's list brokering services when you need to go outside your company for a mailing list that meets the needs of your direct mail campaign.

We will research lists to identify the ones that will work best for you and make arrangements for you to rent the list from the list owner. Thousands of lists are available, and we know how to make the task of selecting the right mailing list for you much easier.

You can target prospects by age, income level or credit score, or sometimes drill down to specifics like the kind of car they drive, restaurants they like, or brands they favor.

The least expensive lists are those compiled from public records like census data, real estate transactions, professional licenses, even the phone book. The cost of a list varies, but goes up in price as you add more specific filters or criteria.

The more your list reflects the demographics or interests that mirror your ideal clients, the more valuable the list is to you.

### RESPONSE LIST

A response list is a list of people who have made purchases of specific items or responded to particular offers. So if you manufacture home gardening tools, you might look to rent a customer list from a seed company.

### SPECIALTY LIST

Specialty lists support niche marketing that target specific markets, vocations, or trade industry, like attorneys or Chamber of Commerce members. These lists contain people who share particular interests or purchasing habits — for example, people in Minneapolis who have purchased a Mercedes Benz in the past three years.

These lists are usually privately owned, and the owner may require that the renters meet specific criteria to use the list.

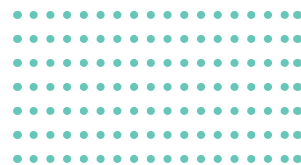
### COMPILED LIST

You also may want to create a compiled list, which draws from multiple list sources. You can combine a house list with a rental list, or add a new list to a list you've used previously.

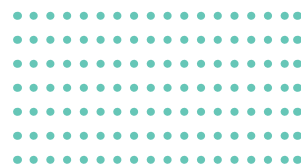
### SEGMENTED LIST

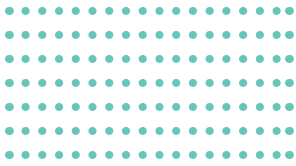
Segmentation is the process of dividing a large mailing list into smaller groups so that a message or offer matches their specific needs. There are several ways to segment a list:

- Geographically, basing the list by location of your prospects;
- Demographically, grouping people together using specific demographic data like age, gender, or income;

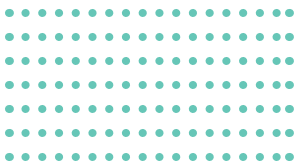


The more your list reflects the demographics or interests that mirror your ideal clients, the more valuable the list is to you.





You're looking for people who have the same tendencies as your best customers.



- Psychographically, grouping people together using personality traits, beliefs, values, interests, hobbies, or lifestyle;
- Sales Stage, where the prospect is in the sales pipeline, from those who are not familiar with a product or brand to those who are active clients;
- Firmographically, which is used in business-to-business marketing to divide businesses by meaningful market segments.

It's common to use multiple segments to build your list, like combining age with location, or hobbies with income level.

### PROPENSITIES AND SELECTS

Targeted lists use propensities, which are tendencies that predict consumer behavior. Someone who has a membership to a golf club might have the propensity to buy new golf clubs. Someone who drives an Acura might have a propensity to buy a new Acura. You're looking for people who have the same tendencies as your best customers.

**A select is an attribute that reflects a propensity.** A list of people with cars that are at least three years old; people who listen to country music; people age 25 to 35 who make at least \$100,000 a year. All those selects, plus thousands more, can be used to build a rental mailing list. So selects are the items you shop for when buying a list that will get you to your targeted propensity.

MPX will work with you to hone in on the selects that will best work for you in your direct mail campaign.



## SETTING UP YOUR IN-HOUSE MAILING LIST

When you're using the USPS for a direct mail marketing campaign, there are a lot of rules and regulations to follow. In return for following the postal regulations, you get a significant discount on the cost of postage. The bottom line is, you get a steep postal discount for making the mailing as easy for the USPS to process as possible.

**NOTE: If USPS rejects more than five percent of your mailing for not following the regulations, you risk losing your postal discount.**

When you purchase a rental list, it will come already formatted to meet USPS standards. But when you are creating a house list, you need to follow USPS regulations and guidelines to get the discount. This section will help you set up a compliant mailing list.

To be most valuable to you, each element of your mailing list needs a separate field that's size is appropriate for the information it will hold. It also makes a list more accurate and easier to update. In a basic mailing list, the fields would include first name, last name, street address, city, state, and zip code.

Strategically, it's better to create a list that anticipates all fields you could need for different types of mailings, even if those specialized mailings occur infrequently. For instance, you might also want to include a field for:

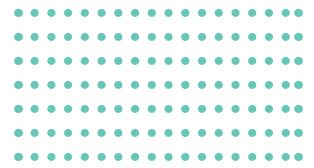
- company name
- company title
- social title (formal)
- alternative first name (casual)
- spouse's first name
- age
- gender
- household income
- sales volume

Foreign addresses need different fields than those in the U.S. Consider creating a different list for them. If you need help, call MPX.

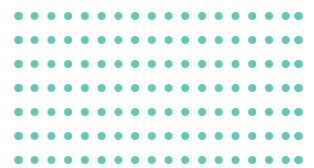
Trust us; it's much easier to begin the list with those additional fields than to try to add them after the list is built.

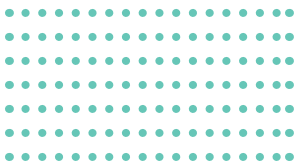
### STYLE GUIDELINES

We also recommend that you establish a written set of rules, a style sheet, for everyone who works with the list to follow so that all entries conform to your list standards. Determine how you will handle titles so that they are consistent throughout the list – CEO or Chief Executive Officer, VP Sales, or Vice President of Sales. Decide if you will use middle names or initials. Take into account that spelling out all words may create entries that are longer than the allowable field length. Following the style guidelines will make formatting the mailing list easier and eliminate errors.



The bottom line is, you get a steep postal discount for making the mailing as easy for the USPS to process as possible.





An accurate list contains names that are spelled correctly, addresses that are up-to-date and conform to USPS standards, and is free from duplicates.



### MERGE/PURGE

When you are compiling a list from more than one source (for example, combining a list you've rented with a current client list), you'll need to run it through an initial merge/purge process. MPX does this using mail list management software.

In the merge/purge process, names and address lines are merged into one list, and duplicate records are identified and purged. Since names and mailing addresses are often entered into multiple databases with slightly different formats or spellings, the software cross-checks to make sure duplicates are correctly identified. This ensures that individuals or businesses receive only one mail piece and saves you money on postal and print costs.

MPX dedupes all mailing lists to identify and remove duplicates within a list just prior to sending out a mailing. For more information on deduping, see the List Validation section of this book.

### POSTAL REGULATIONS FOR DIRECT MAIL

The accuracy of the mailing list is vital to a successful mailing. An accurate list contains names that are spelled correctly, addresses that are up-to-date and conform to USPS standards, and is free from duplicates.

**We suggest a minimum of five fields for a recipient's name.** As seen in the chart below, all examples comply with the USPS regulations, which can also be found in USPS Publication 28 Postal Addressing Standards found at <http://pe.usps.gov/text/pub28/welcome.htm>.

USPS will sometimes require that a regulation be followed exactly, as with State Postal Codes, where only the two-digit codes are acceptable for use. With other regulations, like abbreviations, there is more flexibility. The key is knowing what USPS finds clearly unacceptable.

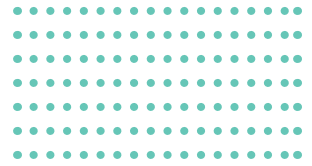
*This chart shows you options for formatting your mailing list; all variations are acceptable:*

Prefix/Title	First Name	Middle Name/Initial	Last Name	Suffix
Mr	Thomas	RJ	Black	Jr
	Julie	Ann	Byrd	
Dr	Fred		Cane	DDS
MRS	BEATRICE	M	CRANK	ESQ
Mr and Mrs	Mark		Tyler	

*Select one format for your list and don't deviate from it. The USPS prefers ALL CAPS for direct mail, but it's not required. Just stay consistent.*



**If you plan to use your mailing list for multiple purposes, you may not want to use ALL CAPS. That's o.k., MPX has software that can convert your list into all caps when necessary without altering your master list.**



Maintain consistency in the data fields. Make sure only addresses are put in the data field headed Address Line, only company names are in the field marked Company Name, etc. It may sound simple, but when fields get contaminated, it can cause problems for the mailing. Don't get sloppy.

*NOTE: The USPS software can become confused with middle names that are more than one name. It often will bump the second middle name into the last name field and may inadvertently bump the actual last name out of the name block. Try to eliminate multiple names in the Middle Name field.*

**We recommend a minimum of four fields for the address block, as seen in the example below.** You may want to add further fields, like for Directional or Unit Number.

*All of the examples below are acceptable to the postal service:*

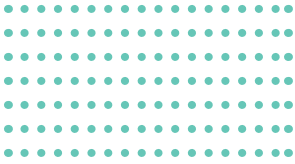
ADDRESS LINE	CITY	STATE	ZIP
1234 Baxter Dr #415	Minneapolis	MN	55404-3211
5678 SW Xavier Ave	Praline	WI	53001
9101 Howard ST N STE 10	Tucson	AZ	85011-0444
1121 DUNKIRK RD W FRNT	FORT MYERS	FL	32899

*IMPORTANT: USPS does not want multiple addresses line fields in a marketing mailing. Place unit numbers in the first address line. It also does not accept unit or suite numbers placed in front of the street address or PO Box.*

*If an address list has a street address and a PO Box, do not include both in the address field. The machine won't read it. The USPS prefers you use the PO Box only.*

**USPS does not accept the use of any punctuation in address blocks, including period marks after abbreviations or commons after the names of cities.**

When the Address Blocks are printed on the mailing piece by inkjet, all UPPER CASE is always used.



## MPX MAILING LIST GUIDELINES

In order to expedite the processing of your mailing list, please review the file requirements below before submitting your file to MPX. It will help improve the accuracy of your mailing list and get your printed piece in the hands of your addressee. It will also save you money when we process your list. The United States Postal Service is very firm in their rules for discount mail; therefore, we need to make sure your list is properly built. *In other words; please help us help you.*

1. Save your list in a Microsoft Excel, Tab-delimited Text (.TXT) or Comma-delimited (CSV) format.

If you use a database manager like Access or MySQL, or a customer relationship management system (CRM) like Salesforce or HubSpot, you can convert your data into Excel, TXT or CSV. If your database is in another format, we can work with you to convert it to a workable mailing format.

Even if a list is submitted in one of these approved formats, there is a possibility of problems with the list.

### The most common problems that we encounter are:

- A) Hard returns within a record – This occurs when someone puts a multiple line address in a single Excel cell. This typically will cause the record to be divided into multiple records and place the data after the hard returns in the wrong field.
- B) Compound address lines without delimiters – This is where a single line may contain multiple address fields with no obvious way to separate the fields. Fields must be separated in order to go through the CASS and NCOA processes. City, State, Zip may be in one field if the field is formatted consistently.
- C) Fields that shift columns between the beginning and the end of the list. This is usually caused by someone merging incompatible lists.

Sometimes we can fix these lists quickly and easily; sometimes, it involves a very time-consuming manual process. If you have questions about the usability of your list, we are happy to take a look at your list and make recommendations.

2. Delete extraneous fields and/or information. Include ONLY the fields to be printed on the label.
3. Text field lengths must NOT exceed 60 characters.
4. State names must be abbreviated (example - AL, NC, CA, TX).
5. If codes are to be printed, please tell us what and where they are in the data stream using the Optional field below. If no codes are desired, please DON'T include them in the file you send to us.

6. Foreign addresses do not fit in the same format used for U.S. addresses. Instead, use separate text fields for province names and postal codes. Country names must be in their own separate field as well.
7. We standardize field names both for validation purposes and for simplified address block creation. This is why your lists may come back to you with different field names.
8. If you are unable to submit your list according to these specifications, we may be able to fix your list at a cost. We are always willing to send back your list in a final repaired version for your future use.

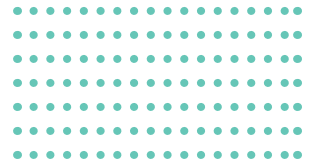
**Required List Fields:**

- First Name
- Last Name
- Address - Street Name and Unit Number
- City
- State
- Zipcode
- +4 – the 4 digit zip code suffix (can be obtained during validation)

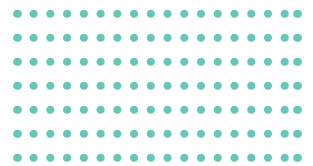
**Optional Fields:**

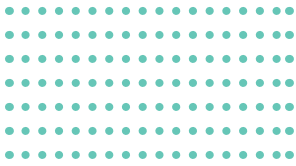
- Title
- Company
- ID Number
- Country
- Other

If any optional fields are desired, please list the order in which the fields are to appear on the label.



We are always willing to send back your list in a final repaired version for your future use.



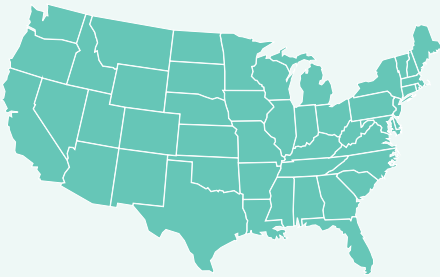


## USPS POSTAL REGULATIONS

*REMEMBER: USPS prefers that all abbreviations be used in all upper case letters, but will accept mixed-case use. No punctuation is accepted. Do not place a period at the end of the abbreviation.*

### USPS State Postal Codes

USPS has assigned a two-letter postal code for each state. For discounted mailings, it does not accept any addresses where the name of the state is spelled out or when any abbreviation other than the two-letter postal code is used. The postal software uses only the first two letters inside the State field regardless of the actual state name.



#### State Abbreviations

Alabama	AL	New Jersey	NJ
Alaska	AK	New Mexico	NM
Arizona	AZ	New York	NY
Arkansas	AR	North Carolina	NC
California	CA	North Dakota	ND
Colorado	CO	Ohio	OH
Connecticut	CT	Oklahoma	OK
Delaware	DE	Oregon	OR
District of Columbia	DC	Pennsylvania	PA
Florida	FL	Rhode Island	RI
Georgia	GA	South Carolina	SC
Hawaii	HI	South Dakota	SD
Idaho	ID	Tennessee	TN
Illinois	IL	Texas	TX
Indiana	IN	Utah	UT
Iowa	IA	Vermont	VT
Kansas	KS	Virginia	VA
Kentucky	KY	Washington	WA
Louisiana	LA	West Virginia	WV
Maryland	MD	Wisconsin	WI
Maine	ME	Wyoming	WY
Massachusetts	MA		
Michigan	MI	<b>U.S. Territories</b>	
Minnesota	MN	American Samoa	AS
Mississippi	MS	Guam	GU
Missouri	MO	Marshall Islands	MH
Montana	MT	Micronesia	FM
Nebraska	NE	Northern Marianas	MP
Nevada	NV	Palau	PW
New Hampshire	NH	Puerto Rico	PR
		Virgin Islands	VI

For more information, go to <https://www.infoplease.com/us/postal-information/state-abbreviations-and-state-postal-codes>.

## USPS Standard Suffix Abbreviations

USPS allows many common words found in address blocks to be abbreviated.

### Some of the most common abbreviations are:

Avenue	AVE	Parkway	PKWY
Boulevard	BLVD	Place	PL
Center	CTR	Plaza	PLZ
Circle	CIR	Ranch	RNCH
County Road	COUNTY RD	River	RIV
Court	CT	Road	RD
Creek	CRK	Route	RTE
Drive	DR	Skyway	SKWY
Expressway	EXPY	Square	SQ
Freeway	FWY	Street	ST
Highway	HWY	Terrace	TER
Junction	JCT	Trail	TRL
Lane	LN	Way	WAY

For more information, go to [https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apc\\_002.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apc_002.htm).

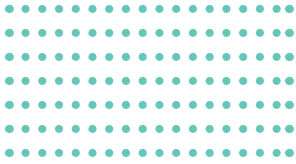
## Secondary Unit Designator Postal Abbreviations

Do not use the # symbol with these designators. It should read "APT 10" or "STE C153."

### Some of the most common abbreviations are:

Apartment	APT	Rear	REAR
Basement	BSMT	Room	RM
Building	BLDG	Space	SPC
Department	DEPT	Suite	STE
Floor	FL	Trailer	TRLR
Front	FRNT	Unit	UNIT
Lower	LOWR	Upper	UPPR

For more information, go to [https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apc\\_003.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28apc_003.htm).



### USPS Directional Abbreviations

There are eight directional indicators that the postal service has abbreviated. They are known as “directionals.”

North	N
South	S
East	E
West	W
	NE, NW, SE, SW

Abbreviate directional to the appropriate one- or two-character abbreviation. For example:

- 234 NW SMITH ST**
- 678 MAIN DR S**
- 101 N BAY DR**
- 599 BAY BLVD SW**

### Single Pre-directional Field (before Street Name)

When breaking down the address from right to left, if a directional word is found as the first word in the street name and there is no other directional to the left of it, abbreviate it and locate it in the pre-directional field of the ZIP+4 file for standardization purposes.

**NORTH BAY ST**  
**EAST END AVE**      **ACCEPTABLE**

**N BAY ST**  
**E END AVE**      **PREFERRED**

### Post-directional Field (after Street Name)

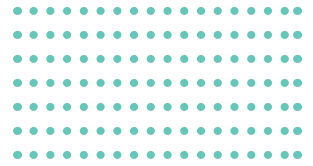
When parsing from right to left, if a directional word is located to the right of the street name and suffix, abbreviate it and locate it in the post-directional field.

**BAY DRIVE WEST**  
**BAY DR W**      **ACCEPTABLE**  
**PREFERRED**

### **Two Directionals**

When two directional words appear consecutively as one or two words, before the street name or following the street name or suffix, then the two words become either the pre- or the post-directionals. Exceptions are any combinations of NORTH-SOUTH or EAST-WEST as consecutive words. In these cases, the second directional becomes part of the primary name and is spelled out completely in the primary name field.

The other exception is when the local address information unit has determined that one of the directional letters is used as an alphabet indicator and not as a directional.



<b>COUNTY ROAD N EAST</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>
<b>COUNTY ROAD N E</b>	<b>PREFERRED</b>
<b>COUNTY RD NE</b>	<b>UNACCEPTABLE</b>

*NOTE: In this example, the two-word directional is the primary street name, as in Country Road N, with a directional East.*

<b>SOUTHEAST FREEWAY NORTH</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>
<b>SOUTHEAST FWY N</b>	<b>PREFERRED</b>

### **Directional as Part of Street Name**

When parsing from right to left, if the directional word appears between the street name and the suffix, then it appears as part of the primary name spelled out in the ZIP+4 file and is spelled out on the mail piece.

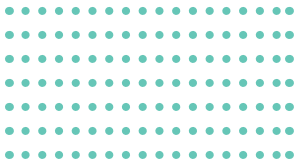
<b>BAY W DRIVE</b>	<b>ACCEPTABLE</b>
<b>NORTH AVENUE</b>	

<b>BAY WEST DR</b>	<b>PREFERRED</b>
<b>NORTH AVE</b>	

The exception is when the local AIS (Address Information System) unit has determined that the letters (E, N, S, or W) are used as alphabet indicators and not as directionals.

<b>BAY A DR</b>	
<b>BAY B DR</b>	
<b>BAY C DR</b>	
<b>BAY D DR</b>	

For more information, go to [https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28c2\\_014.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/pub28/28c2_014.htm).



## LIST VALIDATION

With each mailing, we process your mailing list through several data verification tools designed to improve the quality of your list and to identify problem addresses. These tools are required by the Post Office for all discounted mailings. Here is a summary of the steps we go through and the resulting files which are sent to you to update your mailing list.

### **CASS – CODING ACCURACY SUPPORT SYSTEM**

CASS certification is a two-step process of standardizing addresses and then comparing your list against the Post Office's database of known valid US addresses. It standardizes the address and assigns a ZIP +4. Standardization of an address file means that the software will try to format the address according to the preferred format of the USPS. Non-standard abbreviations, misspellings, misplaced directionals, and typographical errors all add challenges to the CASS process. Some common errors are CO RD for County Road and CR for CIR (Circle).

**If the software cannot identify the address, you may still mail to those addresses but at slightly higher rates.** All mailings that receive automation discounts require CASS certification. As part of the validation process, we will send you a list of addresses that fail CASS certification for your review. We often fix obvious CASS errors if the list is short. However, if the list of "fails" is large, we ask customers to pay for additional file time to make the corrections.

CASS will always add the zip code +4 to the addresses.



## DELIVERY POINT VALIDATION – DPV

DPV is an extension of the CASS process which takes into account greater address detail. **An address for an apartment building with no apartment number is an example of a record that would pass CASS certification but fail DPV.** The Post Office considers some DPV issues as acceptable. Upon request, we can send you a list of DPV errors. Typically we do not remove DPV issues from a mailing list, but if you want the cleanest list possible, this is an additional option for address accuracy.

Technically, CASS/DPV fails are considered non-deliverable due to automated processing.

CASS and DPV certification combined should give you a good list.

## NATIONAL CHANGE OF ADDRESS – NCOA

All presorted or discounted mailings must go through a move update process in order to qualify for postal discounts. The most popular of these methods are NCOA and alternate address format.

**NCOA is the process of comparing your mailing list against the list of customers who submitted change of address information to the Post Office. NCOA is an amazing tool for keeping track of your customers or organization members when they move.** The NCOA file that we supply to you includes both the current address as well as the prior address.

It is very important to update your database with this information since the Post Office only supplies the new address for the first 18 months after a move. (They also offer a 48-month file for an extra charge).

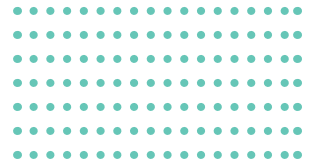
In order to do a NCOA update, you must sign a Processing Acknowledgment Form verifying that you have given permission to the MPX Group and the Post Office to compare your database against the Post Office's NCOA move list.

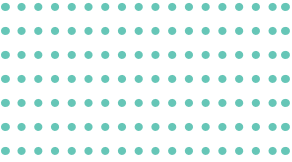
If you choose the NCOA method, we supply both the list of moves under 18 months, labeled with "NCOA," and moves over 18 months labeled "ANK" (address not known). The "ANK" file does not include the updated address.

If you are more interested in mailing to a specific area or specific addresses, you may consider the "alternate address" option. With this option you add, "Or Current Resident" to the address block and NCOA is no longer required because you are mailing to an address rather than to a specific individual. This means the mail will not be forwarded to a new address.

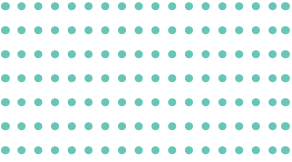
## INVALID ZIP CODES

Occasionally you will receive a file from us titled "Invalid Zips." This will be a list of records which cannot be included in a presort mailing because the zip code isn't valid for the address. Typically, this will be because the mailing software can't determine the correct ZIP code.





We don't remove the duplicates automatically; instead we give you the list of duplicates found and ask you to decide which ones should be included in the final list.



## DUPLICATE REMOVAL (DE-DUPING)

De-Duping is an automated process that removes duplicates from a mailing list based on several criteria. The process is dependent upon several variables, and cannot be made 100% accurate. MPX includes a basic dedupe, but an extensive de-duping may require extra work and an extra cost based on the amount of work that is required.

We don't remove the duplicates automatically; instead we give you the list of duplicates found and ask you to decide which ones should be included in the final list.

If you don't state a preference, our policy is to identify duplicate records by first and last name only. In this scenario, several members of the same household will receive the mail piece if they have different names. But the final decision of how to dedupe is up to you. We can customize the deduping process to your specifications. Other choices are:

- **Dedupe by name and address:** This will detect only those persons who have the exact same name and address. This de-duping selection allows for the greatest number of pieces to be mailed because only persons with the exact same name at the same address are identified as duplicate records;
- **Dedupe by household:** This scenario identifies all persons living at the same address who possess the same last name. Rather than mail to each individual, it is advised that in these cases, we address the family name as "The Anderson Family" or "The Anderson Household." This will make sure that only one family at a household receives the mailpiece rather than each individual person. You may also randomly choose which individual should receive the mail;
- **Dedupe by address:** This means we will show you all of the records that fall in the same address. There could be several individuals listed at the same address. Once you see the validation file containing your duplicate records, you may indicate which person at that address to whom you would like the mailing addressed;
- **Dedupe by mailbox:** This will deliver one mailing piece to each mailbox location and only works for addresses that are CASS and DPV certified and have the IMb barcode;
- **Dedupe by address and company name:** You will receive a list of all persons with the same address and company name and can decide if all or some receive the mailpiece;
- **Suppression Lists:** If you wish to dedupe against the National "Do Not Mail List" or "deceased list," there would be an additional charge depending on the number of records

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR MAILING

If you are trying to mail to a certain area (rather than a specific individual), you can add “Or Current Resident” to the mailpiece. This way the mail piece would be delivered to the current occupant regardless of name.

## MASTER LIST

We are happy to supply you with the completed mailing list upon request. The completed list will contain all the address corrections that have been made to your list without your need to manually update.

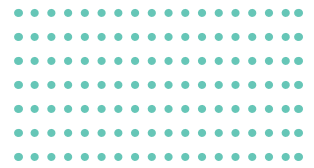
*NOTE: Foreign addresses, like those for recipients in Canada, always fail this validation process.*

Under some circumstances, we will automatically remove a recipient from the list. For instance, if a recipient uses a P.O. Box as their address, and it has been closed, if a recipient is identified as “moved, no forwarding address,” or if they’ve moved outside the U.S.

Even a clean list is not 100 percent foolproof. There will always be a few fails in every mailing. People move without leaving forwarding addresses; people die. But it is far more cost-efficient to clean a list than to send out a mailing with an incorrect list. That will cost you money on wasted printing and postage, risk your postal discount, and make you look bad.



All postal regulations and guidelines contained in this book come from information provided by the USPS Domestic Mail Manual as of October 30, 2019. To inquire about changes in the regulations and guidelines, contact your MPX Sales Rep or visit [https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300\\_landing.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300_landing.htm).

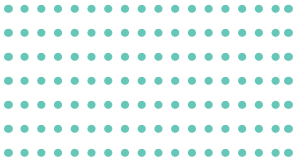


Even a clean list is not 100 percent foolproof. There will always be a few fails in every mailing. People move without leaving forwarding addresses; people die. But it is far more cost-efficient to clean a list than to send out a mailing with an incorrect list.





**NOTES:**



3

# ***Variable Data Printing / Personalization***







## ***Variable Data Printing / Personalization***

Personalization is one of the most powerful tools in direct mail. New technological developments in the field of variable data printing (VDP) are revolutionizing direct mail marketing. Direct mail marketing has transformed from mass mailing into personalized mailings done at the speed of mass mailing.

VDP provides higher returns on investment for your marketing dollars than we've seen before. It's an option you should consider when you design a direct mail marketing campaign.

VDP changes specific elements, such as text, graphics, or images, from one printed piece to the next using information from a database.

Instead of printing 5,000 copies of a single document and delivering the identical message to 5,000 recipients, with VDP you can now print 5,000 unique documents with personalized messages and offers customized to each recipient. It personalizes the mailpiece with information specific to each recipient.

**Studies show that response rates on variable direct mail campaigns are, on average, triple that of the same campaign without variable data – a 300 percent increase.**

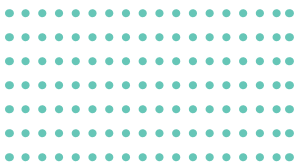
The ROI for campaigns that use variable data increases with the amount of personalization used. The ROI when using basic variables, like a recipient's name, is about double the typical return for a non-personalized mailing. The ROI is 10 to 15 times higher for fully variable mailings.

The only limits on the number of variables used in a piece are what variable data you have. The entire mailpiece can be composed of variables.

The ROI for campaigns that use variable data increases with the amount of personalization used.



Pieces that include personal details or information of specific interest to a recipient will make them feel valued, and it's more likely to grab their attention.



## VARIABLE DATA

Variable data is any characteristic, number, or identifier that can be measured or counted, like age, gender, or income. You can also create variables using a person's purchasing or charitable giving history.

Pieces that include personal details or information of specific interest to a recipient will make them feel valued, and it's more likely to grab their attention.

You can take demographic details like age, profession, or marital status, and personalize the piece by including information on topics of interest to them.

You can include special offers that are specific to a geographic location – a sales promotion happening at the store or branch office nearest to them. Or you can add the name and contact information of the salesperson to whom they should speak.

VDP is available in any direct mail marketing format. The only caveat is that there are privacy regulations regarding the use of some personal data. If you want to use personal information in the mailpiece, you must use it in the letter format where a sealed envelope protects its privacy.

VDP is only done on digital presses using VDP software technology. You can't imprint variables into documents on traditional offset presses.

### Segments

Before you begin personalizing your messages, identify the types of customers and prospects you have on the list. If you know their buying history – what they buy and the frequency with which they buy – you can create strategies for the marketing messages you want to send them. These segments will each receive a different message or offer.

It could be simple, like breaking the list into active clients, infrequent clients, past clients, and prospects. You can also segment by age, gender, marital status, homeownership status, and other demographics or propensities.

Each segment can receive what amounts to a group message or offer, tailored to their specific attributes. You can use segmenting to personalize without using fully variable fields. You may also mix and match variables in a piece, with some segmented fields and some personal fields.

Your mailing list holds the key to VDP. Look at the data you have to determine what kind of variables you can include.



## Data Fields

The most common use of variable data is personalizing the salutation.

Start by using the recipient's first name in the salutation and their full name and address in the address block. Create a separate field for the derivatives or nicknames you want used in the salutation and use formal names, like Robert, in the address block. Using the casual name, like Bob or Robbie, sounds friendlier and more conversational.

You can also insert personal information into the body of the letter or postcard, like their company name, the college they attended, or the amount they donated into the text. You'll need to have a data field in your mailing list for each variable. Make sure the data field is formatted the same for each entry so that the information can be assimilated into the text uniformly.

### EXAMPLE:

*PETER — As a longtime supporter of the MINNESOTA GROWLERS, you are eligible for a special offer on 2020 season tickets!*



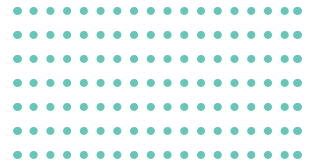
The graphic features a blue bulldog mascot wearing an orange jersey, holding a baseball bat over its shoulder and a baseball in its hand. The background is a blurred baseball field. To the right of the mascot, the name "PETER" is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below the name, the text "As a longtime supporter of the MINNESOTA GROWLERS, you are eligible for a special offer on 2020 season tickets!" is written in bold, dark blue letters. At the bottom left of the graphic, it says "Valid thru April 1, 2020". At the bottom of the graphic, a red banner contains the text "Visit MNGrowlers.com for complete schedule and more info." in white.

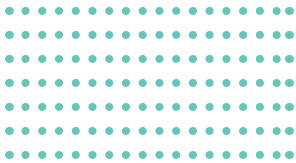
Don't include "the" in the data field as it will read "the the Minnesota Growlers."

Also, avoid abbreviations or nicknames in the data field unless you're sure they will assimilate into the sentence.

You can continue adding data fields into the text. Some data fields can be a single word or number; others can be full sentences or paragraphs. The more data fields you insert, the more personal the mailpiece becomes.

Variable data uses vector files (.pdf, .eps, .svg, .ai). Text, fonts, logos, and colored boxes are all vector files.





### Variable Text Blocks

You can also use entire blocks of text as variable data for specific segments of your list. For instance, you can have a different paragraph written for three separate groups of recipients – one for families with small children, one for families with grown children, and one for couples with no children. The variable field will determine which paragraph a recipient receives.

### Variable Data on Images

You may also personalize a piece by inserting a name onto an image.

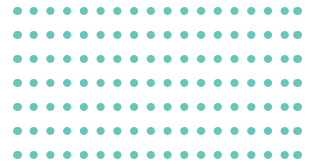


### Variable Images

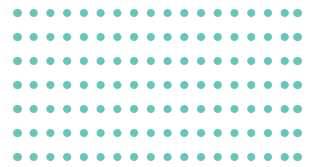
Not only words can be personalized. The whole look and feel of the piece can be altered to reflect the reader's interests or demographics.

Usually, different segments of the mailing list are assigned images or colors that correlate most closely with their demographics or propensities. You might segment your list by school district they live in, the church they attend, or organization to which they belong. The images used for each segment reflect their specific demographics.

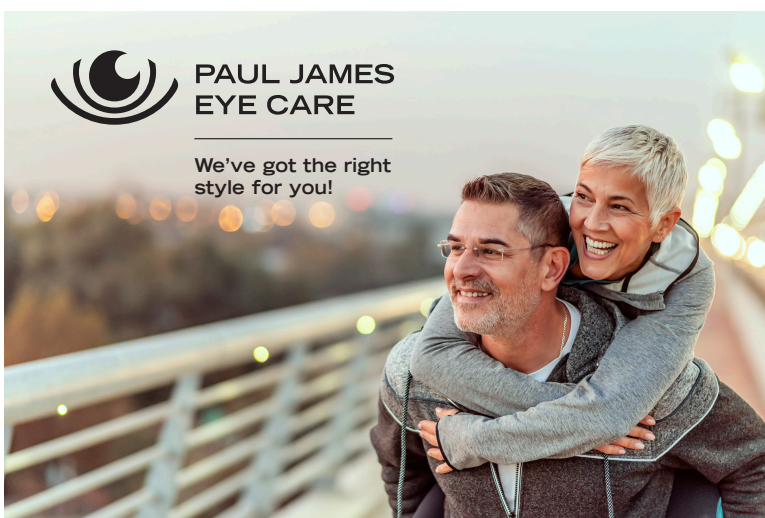
Vary color choices, fonts, and images to appeal to different demographics. Colors and images that would appeal to families with small children might differ from those of more mature couples with no children in the home. Or colors might vary neighborhood to neighborhood based on the school colors of the local high school.



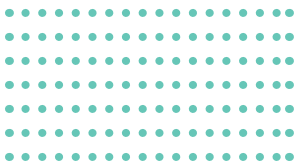
Not only words can be personalized. The whole look and feel of the piece can be altered to reflect the reader's interests or demographics.



*Variable image used for families with children*



*Variable image used for couples with no children*



### **Types of Variable Images**

- Special Offers
- Graphic Images
- Design – Colors and Fonts
- Maps
- Photos
- Coupons
- QR Codes
- Tracking Codes

Variable images are formatted as raster files (.jpg, .gif, .png, .tif). They are, in effect, graphic arts files.

### **Timeline**

The time it takes to complete a mailing using variable data increases based on the complexity and amount of variables used. The use of simple variables, such as names in salutations or inserting a barcode in the address, won't increase production time at all. But when you use variable images throughout a piece, plan to add a day or two of production time to the process.

# 4

## ***Design + Content***







## ***Design & Content***

Good design is critical to a direct mailpiece. You only have a recipient's attention for a few quick seconds before they decide whether to read your piece or toss it aside.

The goal of a well-designed mailing piece is to create reasons for your target market to read the mail piece and respond.

### **DIRECT MAIL FORMATS**

There are three traditional types of direct mail marketing pieces, as well as several specialty mailers.

- Postcards
- Letters
- Self-Mailers
- Specialty mail pieces include flats, parcels, 3D pieces, and die-cut pieces

We will be discussing the components of each format in this section.

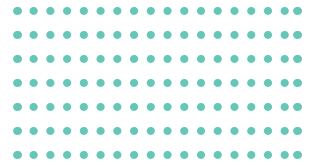
### **MARKETING ELEMENTS**

Five main elements go into creating a mailing piece, regardless of size or format. They are the graphics, copy, the offer, call-to-action, and printing.

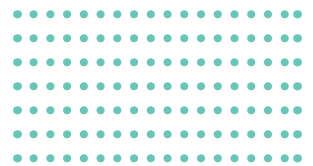
In many ways, graphics are the most critical element because if you don't catch the eye of the recipient, they won't read the piece. But once you catch their eye, then all the rest becomes crucial to your ROI.

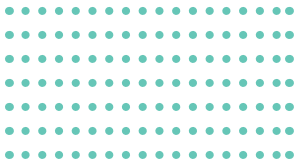
Keep USPS regulations in mind when you design. If your piece is even slightly larger or thicker than postal requirements, you will be bumped up to a higher postal rate. For a larger mailing, it could cost you hundreds or thousands of dollars.

For more information on USPS sizing, folding, sealing, and postage discounts for each size and format, see our Postal Guidelines section.



Good design is critical to a direct mailpiece. You only have a recipient's attention for a few quick seconds before they decide whether to read your piece or toss it aside.

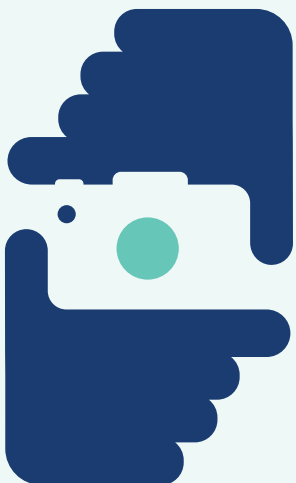




## GRAPHICS

Design is your most powerful tool to make your mail piece memorable. Carefully chosen graphics that illustrate your message get people's attention and increase the chances of them reading of the mailpiece.

Good design builds brand recognition. Because people only glance at their mail, people who recognize your brand are more likely to respond. It's particularly true with repeat customers. Large brands – like Target and Jiffy Lube – are highly successful in direct mail marketing because their brands are so recognizable. People automatically pull their pieces out of the mail pile and save them to read. So stick to your brand design guidelines.



### Here are things to keep in mind when designing your direct mail piece:

- Make sure to place your **company logo** in a prominent location. You want readers to know who is sending the piece.
- Protect your **brand identity**. Follow your brand style guide and be careful with any deviations, including the logo, style, typeface, font, and shapes in the design.
- Leave plenty of **open space** in your layout. Your eye needs that space to move from point to point. A cluttered piece can feel overwhelming to readers.
- Use **compelling images** that communicate the message you want to send your readers. Our eyes naturally are drawn to facial and graphically recognizable images.
- Your **colors** need to pop. Use of contrasting colors increases your ability to attract the eye. Make sure your colors are compatible with your brand and are in sync with the emotion you want the piece to create.
- Unique and captivating **fonts** attract readers and can be your secret weapon. But don't use too many fonts or font sizes in one piece because it will look cluttered. We recommend using no more than three different font families in the piece.
- Use **variable data and imagery** to personalize your mailing piece. Using personalization (like names, locations, and interests) has proven to increase readership because it speaks directly to the individual reader.
- **Specialty printing effects** like foil, spot UV coating, and laminates can add textures and vibrancy that draw attention to the piece.
- For any postal discounts, you will need space on your mail piece for the **Intelligent Mail barcodes (IMb)**. It's the barcode the USPS uses to sort, track, and deliver the mail. See our Postal Guidelines section for more detailed information.



Graphics are one area where you definitely should use a professional. A poorly designed piece will not get read. It will come across as cheap and unprofessional. That reflects poorly on your company. Use an experienced designer who understands how to work within your brand parameters.

## OFFER

The offer you make your target market will determine whether they respond or not. The offer is something of value that you provide to your recipients in exchange for their response. It has to be compelling enough to get them to act. Like Don Corleone in *The Godfather*, make them an offer they can't refuse.

Come up with a formula that balances just how aggressive you need to be in your offer (what you're willing to spend) to get each respondent through the door. Then you need to figure out how many sales you need for the campaign to be profitable. It varies widely from customer to customer. An MPX sales rep can help you with this calculation.

A company marketing a big-ticket item with a healthy profit margin, and offering a 10 percent discount, might be delighted with a .05 percent response rate. A company selling a \$5 widget with a small profit margin, with the same 10 percent discount, might be devastated by a 5 percent response rate. Their response rate might need to be 10 – 15 percent or more to break even.

Things to take into account are: how often the customers will purchase an item, how many they purchase, how competitive the price-point is in the industry, and the cost of the item. All will factor into the response rate calculation and what kind of offer you can afford to make.

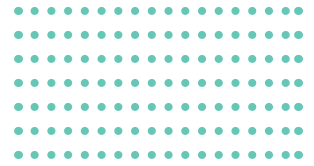
**An excellent way to test your offer is to send out a smaller, controlled mailing to a targeted market to see how they respond.** Then you can make adjustments to your offer based on the response.

Always include a time limit on the offer.

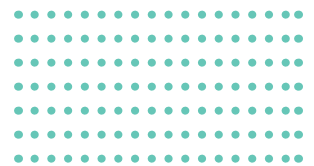
Some common offers include:

- Discount
- Coupon
- Free gift
- Special event
- Buy one, get one free
- No interest for 90 days (90 days same as cash)
- Free sample, consultation, or trial

You can also use a more psychological approach to your offer (We're offering you the chance to be the first to see a new model or line). This approach doesn't use a discount or gift to entice the reader but a way to make them feel special.



An excellent way to test your offer is to send out a smaller, controlled mailing to a targeted market to see how they respond. Then you can make adjustments to your offer based on the response.



The quality of your printing makes you stand out from the crowd. It makes you look professional and credible. Printed pieces have a much longer shelf life than other forms of marketing.

## CALL TO ACTION

A call to action in your marketing campaign invites the recipient to take a specific action – “call now 612-555-1212,” “visit our website at [www.widget.com](http://www.widget.com),” “visit our store at 1234 Market PL.” It tells your readers precisely what you want them to do.

It can be a:

- call to buy (“visit our website to order your new widget”);
- call for information (“for more information visit our website”);
- call to meet (“call us now to set up your free consultation”);
- call to act (“get started now” or “join now”).

There are hundreds of call-to-action phrases you can use.

You can use a dedicated phone number, URL landing page, coupon, or code to track your response. Another way to track your response is to make the offer exclusive to your marketing campaign. That way, all sales of a specific product or service are generated through the mailing campaign.



## PRINTING

Often a prospect’s first impression of your company comes through your printed piece. You can’t afford to make a bad first impression. The quality of your printing makes you stand out from the crowd. It makes you look professional and credible. Printed pieces have a much longer shelf life than other forms of marketing.

Take note: full-color printing has become the standard for business marketing.

Both digital and offset printing offer extremely high-quality results. The two significant deciders in choosing one over the other are the volume of pieces and the niche project requirements.

Digital printing is better suited for short-run printing and printing using variable data. It’s also needed when using some specialty printing effects. Digital printing is also less expensive for fast-turnaround projects.

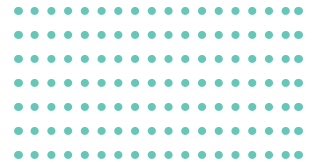
Offset printing is better suited for higher volume jobs when content doesn't change within the run. Offset printing can run larger sheet sizes. It also can provide superior color controls than digital printing. If your branding requires color consistency, the colors will be more precise on an offset press.

### SPECIALTY PRINTING EFFECTS

MPX offers several printing effects that can enhance the look and feel of your mailing piece, making it look more expensive, attractive, and eye-catching.

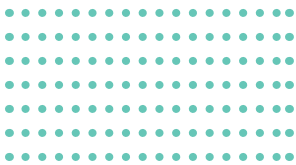
- **Aqueous Coating** – a clear gloss, satin, or matte finish that improves the durability of mail pieces;
- **Soft Touch Laminate** – a clear protective overlay with a smooth, velvet, or silk feel;
- **Spot U/V Coating** – the highest gloss finish available for printed pieces, cured by ultraviolet light;
- **Metallic Inks** – a varnish containing metallic particles which rise to the surface, reflecting light and creating sheen;
- **Die-Cutting** – a technique to uniformly cut interesting shapes, holes, and contours into the piece. Check with MPX before planning a die-cut job as some die-cut pieces cannot be mailed;
- **Embossing** – pressing an image into cardstock to create a three-dimensional design;
- **Foil Sleeking** – metallic or pigmented foil applied to a piece to create a decorative finish.

When deciding to use a specialty printing effect on your direct mail piece, it's essential to consult with MPX first. A planning meeting is usually suggested to determine a timeline for the project. Some printing effects will not take much additional time to accomplish. Other effects, like die-cutting, embossing, and foil sleeking, can take up to a few weeks, depending on the project.



When deciding to use a specialty printing effect on your direct mail piece, it's essential to consult with MPX first. A planning meeting is usually suggested to determine a timeline for the project.





What are your target market's pain-points? What keeps them awake? Address that pain-point, make the message relevant to what they are experiencing, and then offer a solution or benefit.



## COPY

Make your copy customer-focused. What are your target market's pain-points? What keeps them awake? Address that pain-point, make the message relevant to what they are experiencing, and then offer a solution or benefit. Attention-grabbing headlines are also vital, as is informative text. Since different mailing formats require different types of copy, we've broken copywriting down by format.

### FORMAT #1: POSTCARDS

Compelling postcards adhere to the principle that less is more. Keep it simple and focused on the customer. The main job of a postcard is to get the recipient to respond to your offer, not to give them a long-winded sales pitch or blow your own horn.

You have to catch the recipient's eye, grab their attention, and make them want to read the postcard. Colors, fonts, images, and layout all play a part in catching their eye. Go easy on text. Don't make more than 2 or 3 points in the copy.

Start by addressing a pain point. A pain point is a specific problem a prospective client is experiencing. It doesn't have to be a big pain; just enough of a problem that they'll be motivated to respond.

Then, you must make them an offer that will excite them. If readers don't perceive the offer as a good value, they won't respond.

Finally, you need to tell the recipient what you want them to do. Call, phone, or visit your website. It's the call-to-action.

#### The Formula

Yes, it's a formula. It's a formula because it works. Let's create a postcard from scratch to see how a simple postcard works. Credit scores are a "select" that's readily available, so let's create a credit improvement company.

On the front of the postcard, we'll use a vivid image that our target market can relate to concerning their pain: a man at the bottom of a dark hole looking up.

#### *Credit Score Got You Down?*



On the back, let's state a solution or benefit of using our company: a shiny new ladder with credit scores rising with each rung.

**Raise Your Credit Score 100 Points in 30 Days.**

Let's give them a little tease to keep them reading:

**Find out how easy it is to do!**

Now, let's make an offer:

**Get a Free 15 Minute Consultation with a Certified Credit Advisor.**

Finally, let's issue a call to action:

**Call us now at 888-000-0000 to set up your appointment.**



Notice how few words we use — no information about our company except our logo, phone number, and web address. We direct everything to the recipient's pain-point and a benefit to them of using our company.

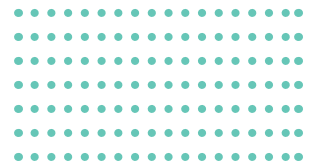
### **Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA)**

Not all direct mail postcards contain an offer. The goal of top-of-mind awareness marketing is to make your brand/company/product the first that comes to mind when a customer thinks about a particular industry or category. Realtors, mortgage lenders, and insurance companies often use TOMA. This type of marketing works best as an ongoing campaign, so recipients become familiar with you and what you can offer them whenever they're ready to buy.

For example, if you are a computer technology consultant, you might start with a headline like Computer technology can be a scary realm. Use an appropriately frightening image.

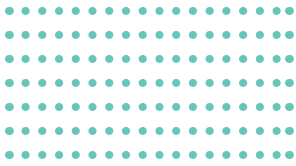
Then highlight a few things your company can help clients understand, like Data Security, Equipment Purchases, Networking.

Instead of an offer, you say, "Let me be your guide."



The goal of top-of-mind awareness marketing is to make your brand/company/product the first that comes to mind when a customer thinks about a particular industry or category. Realtors, mortgage lenders, and insurance companies often use TOMA.





Design of the envelope is critical. It needs to scream, “open me!” to get readers to open the pack and explore.



For your call to action, you include a photo of yourself, along with your name and a phone number or website address.

You want to keep TOMA postcards simple.

### **FORMAT #2: DIRECT RESPONSE LETTERS**

As implied in the name, direct response letters are meant to generate an immediate response from readers. You’re trying to get them to take action now: make a purchase, become a member, donate to a cause.

Don’t be afraid to write more than one page. Tell a story and keep it interesting and informative.

If you’re not already using an experienced writer for your letter, get one. Direct response campaigns cost money, and you don’t want to risk your ROI by sending a “do-it-yourself” letter.

#### **The Pack**

Most direct response letters come as part of a pack. Inside an envelope, you place the letter, as well as other materials, like a brochure, an invitation, a postage-paid reply envelope, small gifts or promotional items. They’ll open the envelope to find out what cool stuff is inside.

Design of the envelope is critical. It needs to scream, “open me!” to get readers to open the pack and explore. Use vibrant colors and fonts, as well as slogans or catchphrases. Lean heavily on your brand identity. If they recognize your brand, they’re more likely to look inside.

#### **The Letter**

Once they’ve opened the envelope, the first thing a reader will do is look at the letter. It’s human nature. They want to know why you want to talk to them. The letter is where you have your sales conversation.

To do this, you need to use vibrant language and stories that will evoke strong emotions in the reader. Include bold headlines.

Here are some basics: talk about the reader’s fears and worries, touch their pain points, and address their immediate needs.

Make the letter about the reader. Use the word “you” as often as you can. Tell them how your product or service directly improves their life or fills their need. Stay customer-focused. You don’t need to brag about yourself. That turns people off.

#### **\*\*Direct the reader’s eyes to what you want them to read.\*\***

Many people will skim the letter, so write catchy headlines to grab the reader’s attention. Use highlights, *italics*, underlines, • bullet points, 📌✓ symbols, and **bolds** on key phrases.

Keep it simple. Write so the reader can understand.

There are several formulas you can use to write the letter. A simple one is called a “call-to-action formula.” It’s a sales strategy (made famous as “AIDA” in the play/movie *Glengarry Glen Ross*) converted into a letter-writing formula. It goes like this:

1. Demand their attention
2. Grab their interest
3. Stir their desire
4. Call for action

The idea is to build a sense of urgency throughout the letter. As Alec Baldwin’s character in *Glengarry* said, “Always. Be. Closing.”

## PERSONALIZATION

Personalizing the letter is always better than sending a generic “Dear Friend” letter. Readers now expect it; the more personal a conversation the letter creates, the better they respond.

Variable data printing allows you to address readers by their first name in the salutation. You can also insert information specific to them in the body of the letter. Because the envelope protects the privacy of the data, you can use personal information not appropriate in other formats. Here’s an example from an actual letter that was sent out, with the variable data highlighted:

Dear **John**:

You currently have a **FANNIE MAE** home loan with a higher interest rate, in the amount of **\$215,000**. We’re contacting you because you are now pre-qualified to receive Cash Out, remove your mortgage insurance or get a rate reduction.

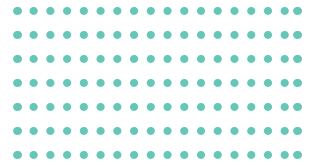
You are now pre-qualified for a lower interest rate, **\$43,000 CASH OUT** refinance that could allow you to have overall lower monthly payments and Free-Up-Cash to consolidate debt or use any way you like.

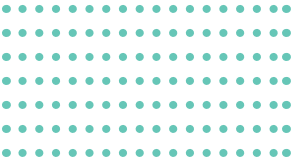
The first thing you’d probably think if you received this letter is, “how did they get my information?” The sender stated not what the home is worth (which you can find on the internet) but the actual amount owed. That number is different for every homeowner.

Then you might ask, “Is this true? Can I get really get \$43,000 cash and lower my monthly payment?” And, you might call them, because they know about you and they’ve run your numbers.

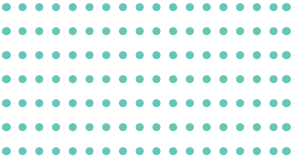
You can personalize the letter with variables regarding their interests, memberships, purchasing history. It all makes readers feel like you know them, that there’s a relationship between you.

For more information on using variables, go to the Variable Data Printing section of this book.





The final element of creating a direct mail campaign is to track the response. If you don't track the response to your direct mail, it's impossible to measure the results.



## SELF-MAILERS

A self-mailer is promotional material sent without an envelope. A self-mailer can be anything from an oversized or folded postcard to a folded brochure or catalog sealed using wafer seals (tabs) or glue.

They lend themselves to eye-catching designs, and they're great when using high-quality photos and graphics. You can jack up the design with interesting folds and special printing effects like foil stamping or soft-touch laminate.

There's no formula for a good self-mailer because they're freeform. That makes them a more flexible piece to design and gives you more room to play with text.

Self-mailers often are considered more sales-like and less personal than letter packs, but they're great for promoting things like sales, events, and coupons. They work best with impulse buys and as lead generation tools.

## SPECIALTY MAIL

Specialty mail pieces include parcels, 3D pieces, die-cut pieces, and other custom pieces. They are unique custom mailings that are high-impact and feature dimensional pieces of all shapes and materials.

Specialty mailers are usually considered high-end direct mail marketing and can be highly effective because of their unique sizes, design options, and memorability.

## TRACKING YOUR RESPONSE

The final element of creating a direct mail campaign is to track the response. If you don't track the response to your direct mail, it's impossible to measure the results. It also means you won't garner any insights into the value of your direct mail campaign, and won't be able to improve your results in any measurable way. You must have a system in place to track all the recipients who contacted you as a result of the mailing. This is called the "measurable response."

The best way to achieve this is through a "call to action" inside the text of the mailing piece using a point of contact. You may direct the recipient to call you, visit your website, visit your business, or use couponing or a QR code (a machine-readable square barcode).

Make sure that every point of contact on your mailing piece is trackable. It will help you identify sales and leads generated by your campaign. Some of the most popular tracking methods include:

- Trackable phone number;
- Trackable URL or landing page;
- Coded coupons;
- QR codes;
- Campaign-specific email address;
- Offer only available to campaign recipients.

Our sales reps can work with you to determine the best method of tracking for your campaign.



All postal regulations and guidelines contained in this book come from information provided by the USPS Domestic Mail Manual as of October 30, 2019. To inquire about changes in the regulations and guidelines, contact your MPX Sales Rep or visit [https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300\\_landing.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300_landing.htm).



# 5

## ***Postal Service Guidelines***







## ***Postal Service Guidelines***

The United States Postal Service is a \$70 billion colossus that processes about a half billion pieces of mail every day – so unwieldy it sometimes seems nonsensical. It has an intricate weave of rules and regulations that often change with little warning. And, it has an acronym for everything.

It's hard to stay on top of it all.

Whenever possible, you should use the expertise of a professional direct mail service provider like MPX instead of trying to do a mailing yourself. One slip-up can cost you hundreds or thousands of dollars on the cost of a mailing.

The discounts you'll receive on direct mail will far exceed the price of using a postal professional.



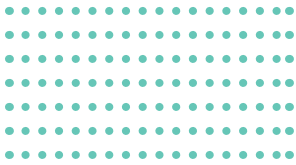
**CAUTION**  
**DO NOT TRY THIS ALONE**

### **DOMESTIC MAIL MANUAL (DMM)**

The DMM is the postal service bible. It is 1,862 online pages of USPS rules and regulations that are, nonetheless, "subject to interpretation" at a postal center when you present it for mailing.

The DMM is found online at [https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300\\_landing.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300_landing.htm).

The discounts you'll receive on direct mail will far exceed the price of using a postal professional.



### **CUSTOMER REGISTRATION ID NUMBER (CRID)**

To get started with direct mailing, you'll need a CRID, which the USPS creates when a customer registers to conduct business with the USPS electronically. It identifies your business at a specific address and identifies your geographic location. You must have a CRID number to get discounted rates. MPX can assist you in obtaining your CRID.

### **BUSINESS MAIL ENTRY UNITS (BMEU)**

The only postal center locations where discounted mail is accepted. Do not take direct mail marketing mailings anywhere else unless you are doing Retail or Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM).

Retail and EDDM are services offered by the USPS that allow mailers to target 100 percent saturation of carrier routes within ZIP Codes without using specific names and addresses on the mailpieces. There is a limit of 5,000 mailpieces per post office. The address block reads only "Postal Customer," and one piece is delivered to every mailbox. Flyers are the predominant type of mailpiece used with these services.

### **CLASSES OF MAIL**

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 263

#### **FIRST CLASS**

**The USPS processes First Class mail on a priority basis...** it goes to the front of the USPS line. Locally, first class will typically be delivered in 1-2 days and by five days nationally.

Specific types of mail, such as personal correspondence, bills and account statements, handwritten or typewritten material, and Business Reply Mail, require First Class postage. Since the pieces are sealed, there is no postal inspection. You pay by the ounce.

There is a special rate for postcards.

If your party has moved, your mail is forwarded at no charge for up to one year. If it's undeliverable, it is returned to you at no cost.

First Class Mail over 13 ounces becomes Priority Mail, and no presort discounts apply.

## FIRST CLASS PRESORT

**If you have 500 or more mail pieces**, First Class Presort offers about a 20% postage savings as processing can be automated. It should be delivered locally in 1 – 3 days, and nationally in 2 – 5 days.

Regular rates apply up to 3.5 ounces for letter-size mail. Above that, it becomes designated a flat. For flats, you pay by the ounce. First Class Presort has the same processing priority as First Class mail, but to receive the lower postage rate, you must include a Move Update Solution. MPX recommends the addresses be NCOA address updated (the USPS change of address database) and CASS certified, which we can do for you.

Other options include marking the mailing piece with “OR CURRENT RESIDENT” or using a USPS Ancillary Service Endorsement for an extra fee. Endorsement choices are “Address Service Requested,” “Return Service Requested,” Change Service Requested,” and “Forwarding Service Requested.”

Your mailing list must go through the “move update” process within 95 days before the mailing.

It requires authorization and a permit. You can use the MPX permit when we handle the mailing for you.

PRESORTED  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 263

## MARKETING MAIL

**Marketing Mail is the brand new term for “Standard” mail**, which is discounted.

If you want to go way back, it used to be called bulk mail and 3rd class mail. The USPS processes Marketing Mail on a “time available” basis. There is NO guaranteed delivery time, only averages. Typically, local mail is delivered in about 3-6 workdays, while national mail can be 1-4 weeks, sometimes it’s faster, but sometimes it’s slower.

**Minimum quantity is 200 pieces.** You pay the same rate up to 3.5 ounces for letter-size and 4 ounces for a flat. Over 4 ounces, you pay per piece and per pound.

THE “PROS”: It’s the least expensive postage mode, a bit more than half the price of First-Class, which enables you to mail more for less. It allows you to pay the same postage for letters, 4 ounces for flats.

THE “CONS”: Due to the delivery time, NEVER use Marketing Mail if you have a rapidly approaching event or expiration date. Marketing mail is not forwarded and not returned if undeliverable. It merely goes into the USPS recycling bin.

PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 263

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 263

## NON-PROFIT STANDARD

A special sub-class of Marketing Mail authorized for not-for-profit organizations offers a lower discounted rate with a Non-Profit Authorization Number. Not-for-profit organizations do not automatically get the discount; the USPS must first authorize them. They can use their permit number or use MPX's permit.

The non-profit organization must include their name and address on each piece. There are strict rules for advertising and content.

Because Non-Profit is a sub-class of Standard/Marketing Mail, all other standard rules apply.

Other classes of mail include *Periodicals*, *Expedited Mail* like *Priority Mail Express* and *Priority Mail*, and *Package Services*.

Prepaid permits can be used on mailings of 200+ pieces or 50 pounds, whichever is greater.

## PROCESSING BASICS

USPS processes mail based on size and compatibility to run through automated equipment. More than 94 percent of all mail is processed on some automated equipment with little human involvement. The larger the mail piece, the slower its processing speed, and the higher the postage costs.

All mail pieces go in one of three processing categories: Letter, Flat, or Parcel.

The class of mail does not affect the processing category, but the location and direction of the delivery address can determine the category.

To be mailable, a mail piece that is less than 3/4" thick must be:

- Rectangular in shape
- At least 3 1/2" high
- At least 5" long
- At least .009" thick, .007" for postcards.

The piece can't be mailed if it doesn't meet those specs. There are maximum sizes on all mail pieces as well, depending on the processing category.

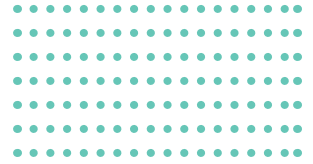
## ASPECT RATIO

Rectangular in shape means the opposite sides of the mailer are equal in length and meet at right angles. All letter-size mailpieces must fall with the USPS's required "aspect ratio." Flats do not need to comply with the aspect ratio.

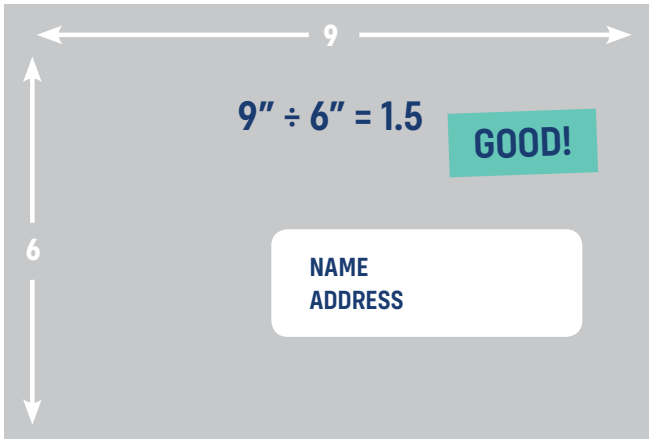
The aspect ratio is the relationship between the length and height of the mailing piece, defining its shape.

The ratio of a postcard or envelope dictates the cost of its postage because it determines if the piece can run through the USPS automated mailing equipment or must be hand-sorted.

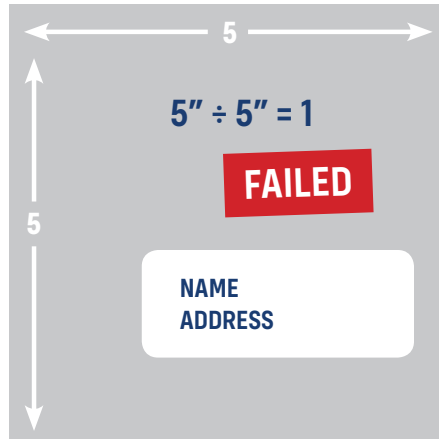
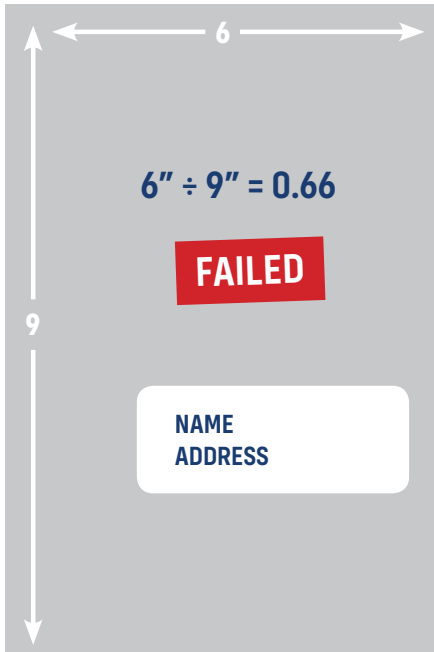
The length is determined by the direction the address label runs.



To determine the aspect ratio of a mail piece, you divide the width by the height. If your results are greater than 1.3 and less than 2.5, you're good. The piece will run through the automated machines, and you get the lowest rate.



If your results are greater than 1.3 and less than 2.5, you're good.

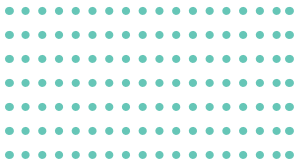


Square mail pieces smaller than 6" x 6" cannot be run through an automated processing machine and therefore are subject to a higher rate.

Rounded corners on cards with a 1/8" radius are allowed.

*There is one exception to the USPS aspect ratio: cards 5 1/2" wide by 4 1/4" high – with an aspect ratio of 1.29412 – are accepted for automation.*

Flats do not have to meet the aspect ratio.



## **INTELLIGENT MAIL BARCODING (IMb)**

Intelligent Mail bar codes are required to get the lowest rates. The IMb includes information on all aspects of the mail and improves processing and delivery times. Its two main components are identification/tracking and routing/delivery.

IMb is used on individual mail pieces, trays or sacks, and pallets of Marketing Mail and First-Class mail. The barcodes all link up to verify that the mail is prepared correctly. You can assign a unique serial number to each mail piece for tracking purposes. MPX can add the barcode when we prepare the mailing.

If you don't include a barcode on your mailpiece, the USPS will print it for you and postage will increase by about 4 cents per piece.

## **SORTATION**

Discounted mail must be sorted, allowing it to travel as close to its final destination as possible before the USPS has to process the individual pieces.

Presort software does the work of placing the addresses in the proper sortation order (FYI: zip code order and sortation order are completely different).

Mail transported closer to its final destination receives additional discounts.

## **PROCESSING CATEGORIES**

### **POSTCARDS**

Postcards are a single, unfolded, sheet of cardstock between a minimum .007" thick and a maximum .016" thick.

**They must be at least 3 ½" x 5" to qualify for First Class rates.  
They can be no larger than 4 ¼" x 6".**

The discount for first-class postcards is up to about 17 centers per piece.

- Leave a 1" x 1" space in the upper right-hand corner of the mailing side design for the postcard's postage stamp or an indicia. An indicia is a box showing the sender has prepaid the postage. (See examples p. 50-52)
- The address and barcode can be placed on the mailing side anywhere within a space on the postcard that is ½" from the left edge and right edge and ⅝" from the bottom, and the space must be 2 ⅛" tall.
- The return address should be located ¼" from the top left side of the postcard.
- There are three ways to build the IMb into your design. 1) leave at least 4 ¾" x ⅝" in the bottom right-hand corner of the card; 2) include it in the address block; 3) if you want the post office to print it, leave 4 ¾" x ⅝" at the bottom right-hand corner.
- Speak to your MPX sales rep to discuss coatings that can be used to protect the art and graphic elements.



## LETTER-SIZE MAILERS

Letter-size pieces make up about 70 percent of a mail processed by USPS. The minimum size is 3 1/2" x 5" and .007 thick.

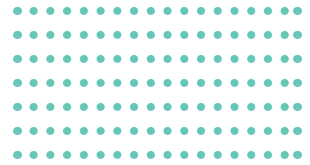
**The maximum size for envelopes and cards is 6 1/8" high and 11 1/2" long and 1/4" thick. The maximum size for folded self-mailers and booklets is 6" x 10 1/2" and 1/4" thick.**

The direction parallel to the delivery address determines the length in all letter-size mail pieces.

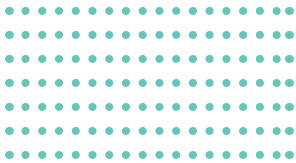
Poor placement of the address block on a letter-size mailpiece can cause it to become designated a flat and will cost more to mail.

When printing your mailpiece, you'll need to follow these design guidelines:

- Place the return address 1/4" from the top and left side.
- Leave a 1" x 1" space in the upper right-hand corner of the front-side design for postage or indicia.
- The Intelligent Mail barcode is 3" x 1/4" and can be put in the address block.
- If the barcode is not included in the address block, it can be placed at the bottom toward the right side corner. Leave a space 3/4" x 4 5/8" in the lower right corner to allow for it.



<b>LETTER DIMENSIONS: FIRST-CLASS / STANDARD / NON-PROFIT</b>			
		<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
	<b>Length</b>	<b>5"</b>	<b>11.5"</b>
	<b>Height</b>	<b>3.5"</b>	<b>6.125"</b>
	<b>Thickness</b>	<b>0.009 inch</b>	<b>1/4 inch</b>



### FLATS

Anytime a mail piece exceeds one or more of the maximum letter-size dimensions, it is usually considered a flat.

The longest dimension of a flat considered its length.

Most flats are processed on automated equipment that can read and sort based on the address or a barcode.

Minimum size without barcode: 6 1/8" high x 11 1/2" long x 1/4" thick

With barcode (automation): 5" high x 6" long x .009" thick

Maximum size: 12" high x 15" long x 3/4" thick

For horizontal envelopes or poly-wrapped flats, the address placement must run parallel to the longest dimension and must be placed entirely in the left half or right half of the piece, never centered.

- For vertical envelopes or poly-wrapped flats, the address must be in the top half of the flat.
- When the address is parallel to the short dimension, it cannot read upside down.
- For pieces without barcodes, the font must be at least 8 pt.
- For pieces with barcodes, the font can be 6 pt. if ALL CAPS.
- For unwrapped flats with the bound or final folded edge vertical and on the right, the address must be in the top half of the flat.
- The address can be parallel to either dimension, but when parallel to the short dimension, it cannot read upside down.

FLATS DIMENSIONS: FIRST-CLASS / STANDARD / NON-PROFIT			
		<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
	<b>Length</b>	<b>11.5"</b>	<b>15"</b>
	<b>Height</b>	<b>6.125"</b>	<b>12"</b>

## BOOKLET TABBING FOR AUTOMATION

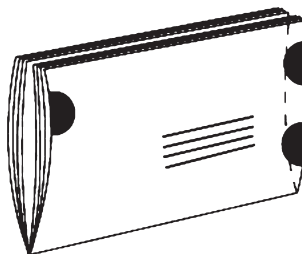
Bound edge must be on bottom or right edge.

### For Horizontal Bound Edge:

- Two 1 ½" tabs on right (lead) edge; lower tab ½" from bottom; upper tab 1" from top
- One 1 ½" tab on trailing edge
- 60# book weight for cover with maximum length 10 ½"

### For Vertical Bound Edge:

- Two 1 ½" tabs on top 1" from each edge
- One 1 ½" tab on trailing edge
- 70# book weight for cover with maximum length 10 ½"

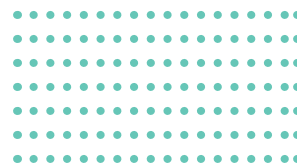


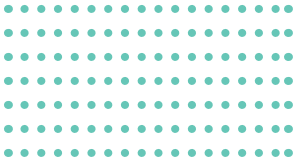
Example of Horizontal Bound Edge

## FOLDED SELF-MAILERS

A folded self-mailer consists of at least two panels created when a single or multiple unbound sheets of paper are folded together and sealed for a letter-size mail piece. A folded self-mailer must be sealed by tab or glue to prevent the piece from jamming during the automation process.

- To qualify as a folded self-mailer, it can't have any binding. The maximum size is 6" high x 10 ½" wide.
- There is a minimum Paper Basis Weight. For one ounce or less – 70# book/ 28# bond and for over one ounce – 80# book/ 32# bond.
- Optional elements that are added to the piece can impact your paper weight requirements.
- Tabs cannot have perforations. Paper tabs are preferred, but USPS allows clear plastic tabs.
- A minimum of two tabs must be used, and three tabs for specific designs.
- MPX always uses 1 ½" tabs.





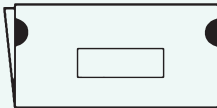
## TYPES OF FOLDS

- **Bi-Fold:** a single sheet folded once in half forming two panels
- **Tri-Fold:** a single sheet folded twice forming three equal panels
- **Quarter-Fold:** a single sheet folded at least two times with the second fold perpendicular to the preceding fold, creating four panels.
- **Oblong:** mail piece with folds perpendicular to the address. The final fold must be on the lead edge.

## PANELS

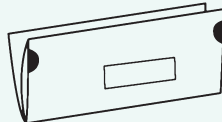
Panels are created when sheets of paper are folded. Each folded section of a sheet is a separate panel and are equal or nearly equal in size. Both sides of a panel count as “one and the same” panel. Folded self-mailer letters have a minimum of two panels.

- When combinations of folding techniques are used, resulting in panels of different sizes, shorter panels must be internal and covered by a full-size panel.
- Internal partial panels are counted toward the maximum number of panels permitted by design.
- The final folded panel usually creates the non-address side of the mailpiece by folding from bottom to top or lead to trail edge. Panel may be shorter but not exceed 1” from the top or trail edge.



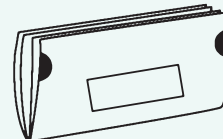
### 2 Panels

Single sheet folded once in half (bi-fold)



### 3 Panels

One sheet folded twice (tri-fold)

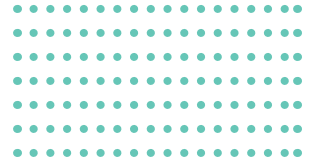


### 4 Panels

- Two nested sheets folded once in half
- One sheet folded three times
- One sheet quarter-folded; two folds perpendicular

### SEALING METHOD: GLUE

Glue can be applied as a continuous line (preferred), glue spots, or elongated glue lines can be placed within ¼" of edge(s).

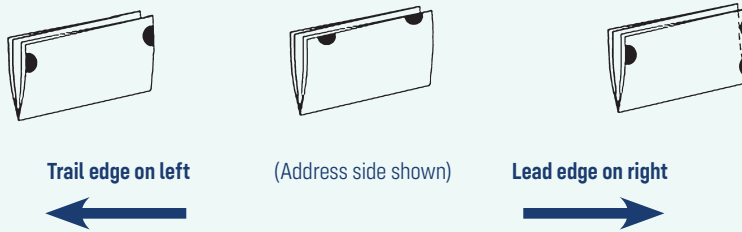


### SEALING METHOD: TABS

Non-perforated wafer seals or tabs can be applied to the top, or lead (Right) or trailing (Left) edges to secure a folded self-mailer closed.

#### CLOSURE METHOD: TAB

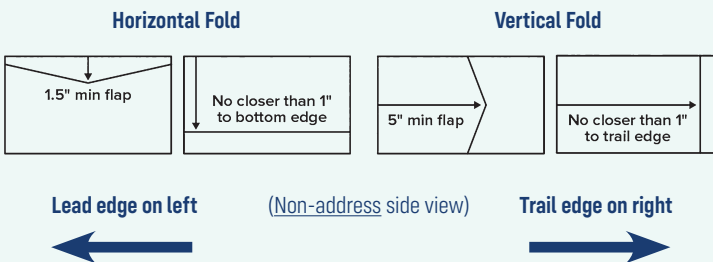
Non-perforated wafer seals or tabs are applied to top, or lead and trail edge to secure a folded self-mailer letter closed.



### FLAPS

Flaps are used for closure of the mail piece. The extended portion of the address side panel as the final fold over and secured to the non-address side panel.

- On horizontal folded pieces, external flap must extend from the top on the non-address side; for a minimum 1.5" length at the longest point, but extend to no closer than 1" from the bottom.
- On vertical folded pieces, external flap must extend on non-address side from lead to trail edge; be minimum 5" in length at the longest point, but extend to no closer than 1" from the trail edge.
- Die-cut shape external flaps are allowed. The edge along the contour must be well-sealed to the panel using tabs, glue spots, or elongated glue line; however, a 1/8" continuous glue line to seal along the contour of the die-cut pattern's edge is highly recommended.





## NON-MACHINABLE LETTERS

The following letter-size mail pieces are not compatible with automated sorting equipment and must be sorted by hand. They are subject to a surcharge of 15¢ per piece for First Class and 12 to 34¢ per piece for Standard and Non-Profit:

- Made of material other than paper
- Not rectangular in shape
- Address runs parallel to the short dimension
- Does not fit within the Aspect Ratio
- Is wrapped in any plastic material
- Has clasps, strings, buttons, etc.
- Contains loose items like pens or keys
- Staples in any location other than the spine
- Is too rigid to bend around 11" drums
- Larger than 4 ¼" x 6" and less than .009" thick
- Weighs over 3 ounces and not enclosed in an envelope – Heavy Letter Mail
- Contains a CD or DVD and does not meet standards in DMM regulations in 201.3.4
- Self-mailers and booklets not sealed according to DMM regulations in 201.3

## REPLY MAIL

Reply mail provides an easy way for customers to communicate with your business via mail. It can be a pre-addressed card or envelope that is provided to the sender so that they can respond to you.

Usually, you pay the postal cost and are charged a permit fee by the USPS for offering the service, and pay the standard mailing charges for each piece of mail delivered to you.

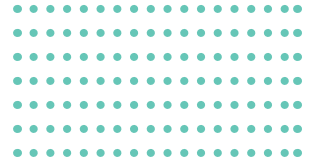
There are three types of reply mail you can use:

- **Business Reply Mail** (You pay postage and handling fees only when the sender returns the mail – a permit is required).
- **Courtesy Reply Mail** (Sender pays postage when mail returned)
- **Meter Reply Mail** (You pay postage, no handling fees)

For USPS regulations on reply mail, see the 505 Quick Service Guide at <https://pe.usps.com/text/qsg300/Q505.htm>.

## CUSTOMIZED MARKET MAIL

Die-cut and odd-shaped pieces may be mailed at Customized Market Mail rates. It allows you to avoid enclosing the non-rectangular, die-cut pieces in an envelope or box and therefore saves the cost of the mailing container. The mail pieces can be constructed of virtually any paper material but can't have sharp edges.



Odd Shaped Mail sent presort Standard rates must be delivered to a destination Post Office, and have a special permit and markings. It is usually not cost-effective to send unless being mailed locally. These pieces must go through a manual process at the USPS.

There is no presort discount available on these pieces as these pieces are processed manually by the USPS.



All postal regulations and guidelines contained in this book come from information provided by the USPS Domestic Mail Manual as of October 30, 2019. To inquire about changes in the regulations and guidelines, contact your MPX Sales Rep or visit [https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300\\_landing.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/dmm300_landing.htm).

## ENVELOPE SIZE CHART



**Business**

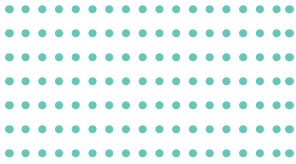
<u>Name</u>	<u>Env Size</u>
6-1/4	3.5 x 6
6-3/4	3.625 x 6.5
8-5/8	3.625 x 8.625
7	3.75 x 6.75
Monarch	3.875 x 7.5
9	3.875 x 8.875
9 (policy)	4 x 9
10	4.125 x 9.5
11	4.5 x 10.375
12	4.75 x 11
14	5 x 11.5
16	6 x 12



**Announcement**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Env Size</u>
A1	3.625 x 5.125
A2	4.375 x 5.75
A6	4.75 x 6.5
A7	5.25 x 7.25
A8	5.5 x 8.125
A9	5.75 x 8.875
A10	6 x 9.5

*continued on page 62 >*

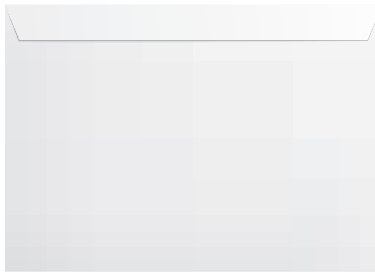


## ENVELOPE SIZE CHART



**Catalog**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Env Size</u>
1	6 x 9
1-3/4	6.5 x 9.5
3	7 x 10
6	7.5 x 10.5
8	8.25 x 11.25
9-3/4	8.75 x 11.25
10-1/2	9 x 12
14-1/4	10 x 15



**Booklet**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Env Size</u>
3	4.75 x 6.5
4-1/2	5.5 x 7.5
5	5.5 x 8.125
6	5.75 x 8.875
6-1/2	6 x 9
6-5/8	6 x 9.5
6-3/4	6.5 x 9.5
7-1/4	7 x 10
7-1/2	7.5 x 10.5
9	8.75 x 11.5
9-1/2	9 x 12
10	9.5 x 12.625
13	10 x 13



# 6

## ***Glossary of Direct Mail Marketing Terms***







# ***Glossary of Direct Mail Marketing Terms***

## **Acquisition Mailing**

A mailpiece sent to prospects specifically to obtain them as new clients, members, or donors.

## **Address Block**

The specific format or order in which the address is printed.

## **Addressee Not Known (ANK)**

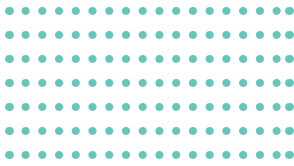
A postal code used when a recipient has moved without leaving a forwarding address or their forwarding address is more than 18 months old.

## **Ancillary Service Endorsements**

Services used by mailers to request an addressee's new address and to provide the USPS with instructions on how to handle undeliverable-as-addressed pieces. The endorsements consist of one keyword: "Address," "Return," "Change," or "Forwarding," followed by the two words "Service Requested." There is a separate fee for these services.

## **Aspect Ratio**

The relationship between the width and height of a letter-size piece, defining its shape. The ratio determines if the piece can run through the USPS automated sorting equipment or must be hand-sorted, which affects postage costs.



### **Bar code**

A coding structure printed on a mailing piece used for sorting by USPS or for internal tracking.

### **Brand Identity**

The visual elements of a brand, including logo, colors, fonts, and design, that identifies and distinguishes your brand to consumers.

### **Build a List**

To assemble data (names, company names, addresses) from a variety of sources, like customers and organization members, as well as rented or purchased lists.

### **Business Mail Entry Unit (BMEU)**

The assigned postal location within a geographic area to submit Direct Mail.

### **Business Reply Mail (BRM)**

A pre-addressed mail piece allowing the receiver to reply to the sender without charge.

### **Call to Action**

Copy in a Direct Mail piece that encourages the reader to respond to an offer, and provides precise details on how to respond.

### **Call-to-Action Formula**

In direct response letters, a call-to-action formula is a sales strategy used in copywriting to build a sense of urgency for readers to respond to the letter.

### **Clean List**

A list that is free of undeliverable names and addresses. It's also known as a "scrubbed" list." A clean list is free of errors like wrong house numbers, misspelled street names, inaccurate or incomplete ZIP codes, duplicate names, and the names of people who have moved or died.

### **Coding Accuracy Support System (CASS)**

A two-step certification process of the USPS to standardize addresses by comparing the sender's database against the USPS's list of known, valid addresses.

### **Compiled List**

A list drawn from multiple list sources.

### **Consumer Analytics**

A process by which data on consumer behavior is used to help companies make critical business decisions, like mailing lists, via market segmentation and predictive analysis.

### **Consumer Data**

The information trail consumers leave behind as a result of their personal activities and buying habits. Companies use this information to target relevant marketing segments with offers, products, or services, as well as to provide them with a personalized experience based on individual preferences.

## **Courtesy Reply Mail**

A pre-addressed postcard or envelope that is provided to the addressee when the sender is looking to receive a response. Usually the person returning the mail piece pays the postage.

## **Customer Registration ID Number (CRID)**

A number the USPS assigns when a customer registers to conduct business with the USPS electronically. It identifies the company at a specific address and geographic location.

## **Data Field**

A place where data is stored, like a column in a database or a text or image field in a variable mailing.

## **Dedupe**

To identify and remove duplicates within a single list.

## **Delimiter**

A symbol, like a comma or tab, used within a data record to mark the end of that field.

## **Delivery Point Validation (DPV)**

DPV determines if an address is deliverable or not. If an address fails DPV the USPS considers that address undeliverable.

## **Demographics**

Measurable characteristics of a population. For businesses, that can include measures such as number of employees, sales volume, or industry. For individuals, it can consist of such criteria as age, gender, household income, or education level. It's also known as demographic data.

## **Direct Response Letter**

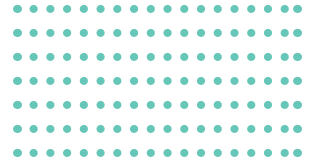
A letter used in direct mail marketing to obtain an immediate response from readers.

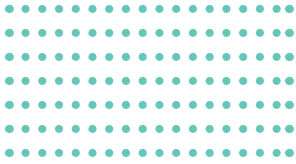
## **Domestic Mail Manual (DMM)**

An online book published by the USPS with all of its current postal rules and regulations.

## **Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM)**

A USPS program used to reach entire ZIP codes or specific postal routes inexpensively by delivering a mailpiece to every residential mailbox within defined geographic parameters without including a name or address, just the words "Postal Customer."





### **Field**

In a mailing list or database, a “field” is a space (in a spreadsheet, it’s called a “cell”) assigned to one item of information. It’s the smallest unit of data used in a mailing.

### **First Class Mail**

Includes letters, postcards, and packages sealed against inspection that receive higher priority in delivery time than other classes of mail.

### **First Class Presort Mail**

A First Class mailing of 500 or more mailpieces processed by automated means. It receives a discounted postal savings and is usually delivered in 2 to 3 days.

### **House List, aka In-House List**

An internally developed mailing list drawn from customers, organization members or donors, and prospects.

### **Householding**

On a mailing list, multiple persons with the same last name living at the same address combined into one “family” listing to prevent multiple pieces sent to the same address.

### **Indicia /Permit**

A printed box in the top right-hand corner of a mailpiece to show the sender has paid for the postage.

### **Informed Delivery**

A new USPS service that offers postal customers the option of receiving daily e-mails with pictures of their Mail. It also provides businesses the opportunity link a web page to the mailpiece, thus reaching readers through two marketing channels – online and by mail.

### **Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMb)**

A 65-bar USPS barcode used to sort, track, and deliver Direct Mail.

### **List Broker**

An individual or company that acts as intermediary between list owners and those who rent or buy the lists.

### **Look-alike Modeling**

An analytic process that identifies people who look and act like your target market. This tool analyses your best clients, identifies some key characteristics, and finds prospects that mirror them.

### **Marketing Mail**

The new name for Standard Mail, which previously had been called “Bulk Mail” or 3rd Class Mail. A minimum of 200 mailing pieces is required.

## Master List

A completed and clean mailing list for a single mailing.

## Merge/Purge

Combining multiple mailing lists and then identifying and deleting duplicates.

## National Change of Address (NOCA)

A data file of all persons who have submitted a change of address with the USPS. All addresses used on discounted mail must be processed against this file to ensure the addresses used are updated.

## Non-Profit Standard Mail

A special sub-class of Marketing Mail authorized for not-for-profit organizations. A minimum of 200 mailing pieces is required, and the postal discount is larger than for Marketing Mail.

## North American Industry Classification System (NAISC) Codes

An industry classification system used by U.S. federal agencies, and agencies of Canada and Mexico, to collect, analyze and publish statistical data related to the North American economies. Individual companies select the codes that best represent their primary business activity. Mailing lists can be built using NAISC codes.

## Pain Point

A specific problem that a prospect is experiencing, used in marketing to direct them to a resolution of that pain through a company's product or service.

## Personalization

In Direct Mail Marketing, the process of personalizing individual mailpieces using variable data and images.

## Postcard

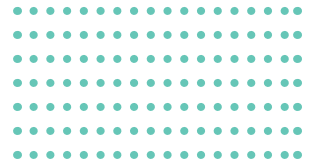
A single piece of card stock between 3.5" x 5" and 4.25" x 6" that receives a special rate for First-Class Mail. Any card larger than that size is considered a letter-size card or a flat.

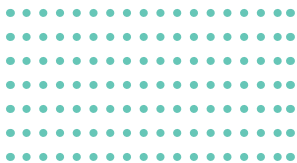
## Processing Acknowledgement Form (PAF)

A form the mailing list owner is required by the USPS to sign to compare and update list data against the National Change of Address (NOCA) database. MPX is required to maintain a PAF for our customers to stay compliant with the Privacy Act of 1974. It gives MPX and the post office permission to modify your mailing list with updated addresses.

## Propensities

Characteristics, behaviors, tendencies, and demographic data that can be used to target consumers with the best likelihood to respond to a particular offer or message.





### **Raster Files**

Digital images created or captured in grid format using pixels. They're primarily used with photos, and its resolution does not hold well when expanded. Raster files include jpg., gif., png., tif.

### **Record**

In a mailing list or database, a record holds all the information about one person or company. A record is composed of such things as name, title, name of company, address, zip code, and other pertinent information related to the person or company.

### **Response List**

A list of people who have purchased products or services as a result of an offer.

### **Response Rate**

Quantifying the success of a mailing based on the number of sales or inquiries divided into the number of promotional pieces mailed; customarily stated as a percentage.

### **Return on Investment (ROI)**

A ratio between net profit and cost of the marketing investment; the higher the ROI, the better.

### **Seed**

False or "dummy" names added to a rental mailing list as a way to check delivery and to uncover any unauthorized use of the list.

### **Segmentation**

The process of dividing a large group of consumers into smaller groups with a message or offer tailored to their needs.

### **Select**

An attribute that reflects a propensity or tendency in consumer purchasing and is used to build a mailing list.

### **Self-Mailer**

A promotion piece designed so that it can be addressed and mailed without an envelope.

### **Specialty List**

Used to target specific or niche markets, vocations, or trade industries. They can also feature the attributes of people who share particular interests or purchasing habits.

### **Specialty Printing Effects**

Techniques that can customize and enhance the look and feel the mailing piece using special finishes, coatings, and press effects.



## **Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC)**

A precursor of NAISC codes, SIC are codes that categorize U.S. companies by the type of business activities in which they engage.

## **Standard Rate & Data Service (SRDS)**

This service publishes a catalog of every commercially available mailing list.

## **Suppression File**

A list of people to be removed from a mailing list, like a company's current clients, bad debt customers, deceased, those who have requested to be removed from the mailing list, or persons on the National "Do Not Mail" list.

## **Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA)**

A form of marketing that is used to raise brand awareness and become top in a consumer's mind.

## **Targeted Mailing List**

A segmented list that uses specific criteria to determine a group of recipients to receive the mailing for a particular offer, product, or service.

## **Undeliverable As Addressed**

A mailing piece the USPS has determined to be undeliverable for various reasons, usually an incorrect name or inaccurate address.

## **Validation File Processing**

A term MPX uses for our processing of regulations instituted by the USPS to reduce the number of undeliverable-as-addressed mail. It includes move updates, as well as removing duplicates and addresses that do not match the USPS database.

## **Variable Data**

Any characteristic, number, or identifier that can be measured or counted. In direct Mail; predictive analysis and look-alike modeling can help you build a mailing list of prospects that mirror their best clients.

## **Variable Imaging**

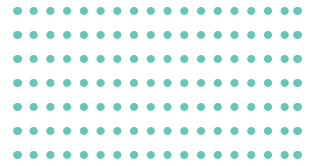
The ability to use specific images for individual recipients in a direct mail marketing mailing using their demographic indicators to personalize the piece.

## **Variable Data Printing (VDP)**

A digital printing technique that changes specific elements, such as text, graphics, or images, from one printed piece to the next using information from a database. It personalizes the mailing piece with information specific to each recipient.

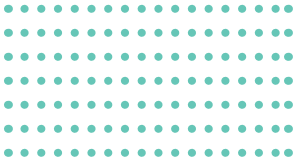
## **Vector Files**

Images created in programs like Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop that use mathematical equations and geometric primitives (points, lines, and shapes) to create camera-ready art and can be increased or decreased in size without harming the resolution of the image. Vector files include pdf., eps. svg., ai.

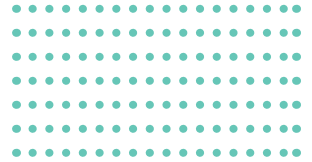




**NOTES:**

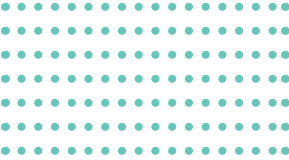


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